

PREPARING THE NOVICE TEACHER
FOR THE FIRST ARD MEETING:
THE ROLE OF THE MODULE, MENTOR, AND MULTIMEDIA

A Record of Study

by

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was on the factors that play a role in preparing novice teachers for their first Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting.

A mixed methods approach was used to answer the research question: Which resource plays a stronger role in the preparation of novice teachers for their first ARD meeting, previous college preparation courses, involvement in a mentoring program, or a Mock ARD Training Video specific to the district's current expectations of an ARD meeting?

This study incorporated pre- and post-surveys and interviews with novice teachers in various departments and grade levels after participating in their first ARD committee meeting. Due to the small sample size available of novice special education teachers in the district in one school year (three in 2012-2013), this study involved both general education and special education novice teachers during the 2012-2013 school year.

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations were made to the district to address the identified areas of continued need as they apply to the ARD meeting process.

DEDICATION

To my husband, Jason, for your unconditional love and support. You have continued to be my cheerleader, my shoulder to cry on, my late night study buddy and my rock. Unfortunately for you, now I have proof you can cook, clean, grocery shop and take care of the kids in addition to completing all of your own responsibilities. Fortunately for you, I will be happy to take all of that back as I have actually missed it for the past four years. Thank you for being you! I love you!

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Novice teachers in Texas leave the profession of teaching early in their careers. A report published by the Texas Education Agency (1995) reported that 19% of teachers quit after their first year of teaching and 12% of those that remained quit after their second year of teaching. By the fifth year, almost half of the Texas teachers had left the teaching profession. Similar statistics can be found on teacher attrition across all fifty states (Aud, Hussar, Kena, Bianco, Frohlich, Kemp, & Tahan, 2011; Kain, 2011; Newton, Rivero, Fuller, and Dauter, 2011).

Teacher attrition negatively impacts school districts in many ways. Teacher attrition taxes the district's monetary resources, weakens the relationships between teachers, causes a loss of trust in the school community, and most importantly has an adverse effect on student achievement.

Teacher attrition is very costly to school districts in that the recruiting, hiring, and training of new teachers involve substantial financial costs (Barnes, Crowe & Schafer, 2007; Foster, 2010). A document prepared for the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future by Fulton, Yoon, and Lee (2005) looked at different cost calculation models used by various industries and determined that America's schools lose approximately \$2.6 billion to teacher attrition. Another formula created by industry human resource specialists suggests that turnover, "costs a company nearly 2.5 times the employee's initial salary in recruitment, personnel costs, and lost productivity" (pg. 8).

Utilizing this model, Wong and Breaux (2003) estimated that each teacher who leaves the teaching profession during their first five years of teaching costs taxpayers in excess of \$50,000. These costs deplete resources that might otherwise be spent on program improvement or working conditions (Barnes, Crowe & Schafer, 2007; Carroll, Reichardt, & Guarino, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003).

Faculty interactions and school climate are also negatively impacted by teacher attrition (Guin, 2004; Foster, 2010). In a recent study by Hanselman, Grigg, Bruch and Gamoran (2011), teacher, as well as administrator, turnover negatively influences the “development and maintenance of social resources” (p. 27). The feeling of school community is shaken and the trust in the school is questioned. Teachers who remain on the campus bear much of the responsibility for mentoring new teachers about school expectations and programs (Guin, 2004). The remaining teachers also take on more of the instructional burden and have less opportunity for professional development, as available resources get used up on new hires (Shields, Esch, Humphrey, Young, Gaston & Hunt, 1999; Shields, Humphrey, Wechsler, Riel, Tiffany-Morales, Woodworth, Youg & Price, 2001). Continual turnover results in a personal and professional drain on those teachers who remain on the campus and, in turn, negatively impacts their ability to fully meet the needs of their students (Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff, 2011).

The significant impact that teacher attrition has on student learning can be measured by the numerous research studies that have been conducted on the topic of novice teacher attrition. An extensive research base exists to provide evidence that staff unity and community can be linked to student engagement and achievement (Bryk, Lee,

& Holland, 1993; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Johnson, Berg, Donaldson, 2005; Little, 1982; Louis & Marks, 1998). Student achievement is defined by the Student Learning, Student Achievement Task Force as “the status of subject-matter knowledge, understanding, and skills at one point in time” (Linn, Bond, Carr, Darling-Hammond, Harris, Hess & Shulman, 2011, pg. 9). According to Bryk and Schneider (2002), the quality of teachers relationships and their trust of one another as well as their students, predicts student achievement. When teachers leave schools, previously held relationships and the pattern of those relationships are forever shifted. To the degree that staff turnover upsets the development and preservation of staff unity and the school community; it may have a similar effect on student achievement (Little, 1982; Foster, 2010).

Teacher turnover results in organizational and human toll, which can be devastating to struggling districts, schools, parents, and students. Districts lose the momentum of reform initiatives when their teachers leave. Schools lose the continuity and consistency that are essential to the fabric of their communities. Students are forced to adapt to a passing parade of teachers, severing the emotional bonds formed with some of the most important adults in their daily lives (Fulton, Yoon and Lee, 2005, pg. 9).

Another article prepared by the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2007), noted that districts struggle to close the gap in student achievement because costly resources and time are exhausted by perpetual efforts to rebuild their staff and more importantly close the teaching quality gap. A teaching quality gap is defined as novice teachers leaving before they have mastered the ability to collaborate with their colleagues which creates a successful learning culture for their students (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 2007). Teacher

turnover can be especially challenging when schools are attempting to implement reforms. Novice teachers coming in each year are apt to repeat mistakes rather than improve upon the implementation of reform (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb and Wyckoff, May 2008).

This turnover ultimately creates instability in schools making it more difficult to deliver consistent instruction (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb and Wyckoff, May 2008). A school's ability to deliver consistent instruction has been shown to be a good predictor of student achievement (Newton, Rivero, Fuller & Dauter, 2011, Guin, 2004). Novice teachers initially lack essential knowledge and skills to implement unfamiliar instructional programs, so must be brought up to speed before instructional progress can be made. If novice teacher turnover is persistent then schools continuously have to start over rather than make progress on their programmatic agendas. This directly impacts student achievement.

There are an abundance of studies discussing the importance of providing supports to novice teachers. Those supports may include, but are not exclusive to, administrative support, induction programs, learning teams, mentoring programs and staff development resources. These supports are in place to assist novice teachers with the potential challenges and concerns of teachers new to the profession. Those challenges may include guidance on how to balance one's personal life with his or her professional life, knowledge of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment within the district, the implementation of varied organizational systems, understanding the climate

of the school and the school system overall, and how to deal with students, colleagues, parents and the community.

Problem

United States and Texas

Not surprisingly, teaching has customarily been regarded as an occupation with high levels of novice teacher attrition (Lortie, 1975; Tyack, 1974). While all occupations experience some loss of new hires, either voluntarily because new employees decide not to stay or involuntarily because employers consider them to be unsuitable for the job, teaching has a relatively high turnover compared to many other occupations and professions, such as lawyers, engineers, architects, professors, pharmacists, and nurses (Ingersoll, 2003; Ingersoll & Perda, 2011). Teacher turnover is especially high in the first years on the job. Several studies have calculated that between 40% and 50% of new teachers leave within the first 5 years of entry into teaching (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987, 1992, 1997; Ingersoll, 2003; Murnane, Singer, Willett, Kemple & Olsen, 1991).

With the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA, 2004) and No Child left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB; 2001) came mandates for increasing the quality of teachers in our public schools. The politically mandated standards and how they relate to actual competence in special education teachers is the main issue (McClesky & Ross, 2004). This is a particular dilemma for special education teachers given the reference in NCLB to highly qualified as the ability to demonstrate competence in specific subject matter areas. To address this requirement, many states are providing guidance regarding special educators as "consulting teachers" when

instructing with general educators and also clarifying expectations for teachers in self-contained classrooms. At odds with these attempts to impose rigor on the expectations of teachers is the serious national shortage of special educators (Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], 2000). The need for qualified special education teachers continues to be one of the most serious obstacles to the appropriate and effective education of students with disabilities (Billingsley, 2003).

Current literature reflects that the highest percentage of teachers leaving are novice teachers due to lack of preparation, administrative support, respect from general education colleagues, and changes in the special education law affecting the amount of paperwork and certification requirements (Texas Education Agency, 1995; Mutaria, 2007; Mitchell & Arnold, 2004; Westling & Whitten, 1996; Vernold, 2008; Nance, 2008; and Pellerin, 2008).

Local School District

My district, located in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, currently utilizes the Mentoring in the 21st Century: Creating a Culture for Learning program with all teachers new to the district by way of its two year teacher induction program, BEAM (Beginning Educators and Mentors). The program provides monthly lessons and activities each organized into eight separate categories which capture the potential challenges and concerns of teachers new to the profession or to the district. Those categories include 1) Personal, 2) Professional, 3) Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, 4) Organizational Systems, 5) Students, 6) Colleagues, 7) School and School System, and 8) Parents and Community. There is also a supplementary section

entitled Especially for Special Educators which offers additional recommended mentoring strategies to provide special educators and teachers working with students with special needs the support they need to deal with unique issues in that area.

In my fall 2011 doctoral internship I created teaching modules for the Especially for Special Educators section of the program that were specific to the policies and procedures of my school district. At that time, there was no curriculum or activities specific to new teachers in the BEAM program available. This had been identified as a need based on interviews I conducted with district stakeholders at various levels within the district prior to my internship.

This district need for additional support in the area of special education prompted my desire to conduct my research.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to focus on a problem that often occurs with new teachers— attempting to understand the complex state and federal laws, regulations, and policies affecting special education programs (Pierangelo and Giuliani, 2007); more specifically to focus on the factors that play a role in preparing novice teachers for their first Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting.

A study completed by White and Mason (2006) asked 147 novice teachers to rank by sense of urgency the stressors they experienced in their first year of teaching. 91% of the respondents ranked special education paperwork to be their primary stressor. 88% ranked IEPs to be their second biggest stressor.

Students in special education have their educational decisions determined by an Admission Review and Dismissal Committee (ARD). The ARD committee must meet at least once a year to review a student's IEP and determine whether the annual goals are being met. The ARD committee includes school officials and parents who are responsible for developing an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for a student and placing the student in the appropriate program that will best address the IEP. ARD meetings are held annually, but can be held more often to review and update a student's placement and/or programming in special education based on their present levels of academic and functional performance. It is a requirement that both a general education and special education teacher be in attendance and that both teachers provide data reflecting the student's performance in their current program. Ensuring that all novice teachers are supported before, during and after their first ARD meeting and possess the tools to be successful in the ARD process is very important in ensuring that informed decisions are made for the student's annual individualized education plan.

An internet search using the key terms 'preparation', 'novice', 'ARD', and 'IEP meeting', resulted in very few literature resources. The lack of preparation for the first ARD meeting is often a result of not being aware of what is expected of the novice teacher in an ARD meeting. It is critical that these expectations are shared with and understood by the novice teachers as educational decisions are made in the ARD meeting based on the student's current achievement performance on district benchmarks, standardized assessment, teacher observation, parent input, work samples, etc., at the time of the ARD meeting.

Determining what supports are needed to assist novice teachers in the district prepare for their first ARD meeting and in what format the material is presented is important to planning for future staff development opportunities for novice teachers to come.

The three factors identified in this research that could have played a role in the novice teacher's preparation for their first ARD meeting were previous exposure to an ARD meeting or college coursework discussing the purpose of an ARD meeting, the role of the mentor, and the role of a Mock ARD Training video provided to the novice teacher prior to their first ARD meeting.

Module

The first factor to be considered in this study is the role that the special education college module plays in preparing the novice teacher for an ARD meeting. "The initial years of teaching are often difficult as the novice transitions from the role of a student, responsible for only his or her own learning, to that of a teacher, responsible for the learning of others" (Jones, 2010). According to the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD), it is believed that educators should be prepared to meet the needs of all students, including those with unique learning needs (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 1998). Definitions and characteristics of students with special needs, rights and procedures involved in special education, understanding the evaluation involved in identifying students with learning differences, setting up effective classroom management for students with special needs and developing appropriate instruction are just a few of the topics that may be covered in a special

education college module course (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 1998).

Before assuming that novice teachers are entering the workplace without adequate training from their pre-service courses, which is the idea portrayed in recent research documents stating that the negative consequences of high levels of turnover in teaching can be linked to teacher shortages, an analyses of national data found that, in contrast, the data indicated that school staffing problems are instead the result of a “revolving door”—where large numbers of teachers depart teaching long before retirement (Ingersoll & Perda, 2010; and Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010). Instead, the data show that beginning teachers, in particular, report that one of the main factors behind their decisions to depart is a lack of adequate support from the school administration, not a lack of pre-service opportunity.

Mentor

The role of the mentor as a resource to the novice teacher, specifically in preparation for the first ARD meeting, is the second factor that will be assessed in this study. An article by Youngs, Jones and Low (2011) reports on several studies that have found within-field mentoring, collaboration with colleagues, and administrative support can increase new general education teacher commitment (Kapadia, Coca, & Easton, 2007; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). In the area of special education, studies have reported that support from mentors and colleagues is associated with increased commitment among novices (Billingsley, Carlson, & Klein, 2004; Whitaker, 2000; Jones, 2010). There have been many studies in particular on the impact a mentor can make in the first

year of a teacher's career. According to the results from the first through third waves of the 2007–08 Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study on Beginning Teacher Attrition and Mobility by the National Institute for Education Statistics Report (Kaiser, 2011), among beginning public school teachers who were assigned a mentor in 2007–08, about 8 percent were not teaching in 2008-2009 and 10 percent were not teaching in 2009-2010. In contrast, among the beginning public school teachers who were not assigned a mentor in 2007-2008, about 16 percent were not teaching in 2008-2009 and 23 percent were not teaching in 2009-2010 (Kaiser, 2011, p. 3). Effective district mentoring programs have achieved up to an 80% success rate in the retention of new teachers in their first five years in the classroom (Butler, 2008). Local Education Agencies (LEA) all over the United States are faced with the challenges of filling teaching positions of those seasoned teachers that have retired. The roles are most often filled by novice teachers, who according to an article by Randall (2010), most of whom will not last through their first year. The most popular method of first year teacher retention is the use of mentors.

Multimedia

The third factor involved in this study is a Mock ARD Training Video created specifically for the fall 2012 BEAM class and the video's impact on the novice teacher's preparation for their first ARD meeting.

A review of the literature did not reveal a similar study using a mock ARD but Perry and Talley (2001) did state that the use of video serves as an influential medium for assisting pre-service and novice teachers in applying newly constructed knowledge to real-world teaching contexts. In fact, recent research suggests that animation (i.e.,

dynamic vs. static images) is a key predictor of video imagery's effectiveness as a learning tool (Hoffler & Leutner, 2007).

This idea can be linked to research on student learning with media. Research on educational programming such as Sesame Street (Bogatz & Ball, 1971; Fisch & Truglio, 2000; Rice, Huston, Truglio & Wright, 1990) and Between the Lions (Linebarger, Kosanic, Greenwood & Doku, 2004) has revealed positive effects of educational television for the reading and language development of young children (Chambers, Cheung, Madden, Slavin & Gifford, 2006, p. 232). Studies involving the use of pictures, illustrations, diagrams and other graphic content to enhance the effects of class lessons and text can be used to support the idea of media embedded in lessons and the positive impact that can be made on student achievement (Carney & Leven, 2002; Schnotz, 2002; Shah, Mayer, & Hegarty, 1999; Vekiri, 2002).

Central Research Question

Which resource plays a stronger role in the preparation of novice teachers for their first ARD meeting, previous college preparation courses, involvement in a mentoring program, or a Mock ARD Training Video specific to the district's current expectations of an ARD meeting?

Hypothesis

My first hypothesis is that the novice special education teachers in this study will identify the mentoring program to have played a stronger role in their preparation for their first ARD meeting based on the special education teacher mentor's previous experience in preparing for and participating in an ARD meeting.

My second hypothesis is that the novice general education teachers in this study will identify the Mock ARD Training video to have played a stronger role in their preparation for their first ARD meeting.

Significance of the Study

As documented in the literature, the demands of being a beginning teacher are complicated by job responsibilities unique to special education (Billingsley, Carlson & Klein, 2004). In a study completed by Connelly and Graham (2009), on an open ended questionnaire, one teacher who had unfortunately chosen to leave the teaching profession did make mention of a district training on classroom management as being of value to him in his position. All other references involving the usefulness of professional development opportunities were made by novice teachers who chose to stay for an additional year in teaching. Those references included: (a) valuing the induction program activities that related to best teaching practices, (b) receiving non-evaluative feedback from veteran special education teachers, (c) having one easily accessible mentor or experienced special educator who filled the role of mentor, and (d) having opportunities to attend conferences or to participate in curriculum development in content areas directly related to their teaching assignments (White & Mason, 2006, p. 192).

It is not the intent of this study to disqualify the importance of the range of beneficial supports that can be provided to novice teachers based on existing literature that provides quantitative and qualitative data supporting the various factors previously discussed. Instead, this study specifically focuses on the supports put in place to prepare a novice teacher for his or her first ARD meeting. This is significant because according

to 34 Code of Federal Regulations §300.324, each public agency must ensure that the IEP Team reviews the child's IEP periodically, but not less than annually, to determine whether the annual goals for the child are being achieved. This is accomplished by developing each child's IEP based on (i) the strengths of the child; (ii) the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child; (iii) the results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the child; and (iv) the academic, developmental, and functional needs of the child (IDEA, 2004). The role that the general education teacher plays is well defined in the law and states it is a requirement with respect to a regular education teacher of a child with a disability, as a member of the IEP Team, must, to the extent appropriate, participate in the development of the IEP of the child, including the determination of (i) Appropriate positive behavioral interventions and supports and other strategies for the child; and (ii) Supplementary aids and services, program modifications, and support for school personnel consistent with § 300.320(a)(4) (IDEA, 2004).

This study is also unique because it incorporates the use of visual media. Aside from a power point (Bartholio, 2012), an internet search did not yield any literature incorporating the use of an ARD meeting video which captures the role of every member as it relates to the ARD meeting agenda in real time. A study by Schafer (2008) on the use of teacher video clubs and their role in changing teacher discourse and ultimately resulted in improving teaching practice, supports the impact that watching an authentic activity can result in positive reflection and learning. Sherin and Han (2004) state that "teachers cannot be expected to learn simply by being told what to do" (p. 163). The use

of a training video may prove to be very beneficial as a component of the district's novice teacher induction program.

Role of the Researcher

Bracketing is a recommended step in phenomenological research that allows the researcher to establish his or her suppositions and any possible bias by making clear his or her own familiarities with the subject matter being studied (Cresswell, 2007; Hycner, 1985, 1999; Giorgi 1975; Moustakas, 1994). The drive for this study comes from my own experiences as an educational diagnostician and the need for all members to fully understand their role in the ARD meeting.

I am currently serving as the Lead Educational Diagnostician in Coppell, Texas. This is my fourth year with my current district. Prior to this placement, I served in the same position at a nearby school district very similar in population and socioeconomic status. I have been in the field of special education for sixteen years.

I received my undergraduate and graduate degrees in special education from Texas A&M University prior to entering the classroom with the intent to teach in a Functional Life Skills setting. Upon graduation, I student taught in a Resource setting and ultimately earned my first position in teaching as a Resource Teacher. I taught in the special education classroom on the same campus for three years before taking an opportunity to focus more on the administrative side of special education as an ARD Facilitator in a neighboring district. After two years, due to my spouse's job, we moved to a smaller town and I reentered the special education classroom. I experienced firsthand the impact an administrator's support can create in a teacher's experience in a

new environment. Due to this lack of support, I found an opportunity to use my teaching skills in a different environment. I began taking courses necessary to earn my diagnostician's license and taught the Special Education Module for the Texas A&M Student Teaching program for two consecutive semesters as an Assistant Lecturer. Even at this level, several factors were in place to create a supportive experience in a new area. Since that time, I have been an Educational Diagnostician for the past nine years. Despite stepping out of the classroom, the role of administrative support, training opportunities and resources continue to play a significant role in my willingness to persevere in an unfamiliar situation.

I am currently a doctoral candidate pursuing my Doctorate of Education degree through Texas A&M University. I am in my final year of the program and was able to apply the skills I acquired to pursue this study which will serve to determine to what degree previous college preparation courses, involvement in a mentoring program, or a Mock ARD Training Video played in preparing the novice teacher for his or her first ARD committee meeting. Upon discovery of those factors, I have identified the supports necessary to address each factor. I am interested in this area of study because I am directly involved with the ARD meeting process and it is important that all members understand and participate fully in the ARD meeting to ensure educated decisions are made for students in special education.

Ethical Concerns

Ethical concerns that arise in any study involving human subjects involve protecting the personally identifiable information of the participants from being

divulged. It was very important to my study that my participants had a full understanding of how data was being collected and reflected in the final report. I organized my data and made recommendations based on information such as age, gender, academic aptitude, ethnicity, and grade level taught; however, I did not provide any information that would identify someone by name. It was also important that my participants knew that if they felt there was a question that may single them out that they could choose not to answer that question. An example would be if the district only had one male teacher. If gender were reported along with an individual statement captured in an interview then confidentiality would be breached.

My purpose in my study was to identify the factors playing a role in novice teachers' preparation for their first ARD meeting. Gaining and maintaining the teachers' trust throughout the process was integral in obtaining truthful answers. I did not want my data collection to impact their employment or standing in the district.

Confidentiality was maintained following the recommendations of the Institutional Review Board which included providing my participants with a written agreement between me and the participant about how their private information will be handled, managed, and disseminated. To ensure confidentiality, collected data was kept in a locked file cabinet that was only accessible to me. The use of codes was also assigned to each survey and interview protocol to further ensure confidentiality was kept.

Ethically I will report my findings fully in my final write up accompanied with recommendations to the district. The Human Resource Director and Special Education Directors provided me access to their teachers in order to determine the factors that may

be playing a role the novice special education teachers' preparation for their first ARD meeting. The information gathered will provide recommendations to the districts to improve supports for novice teachers. Holding back information or altering responses in any way to influence the outcome of my study would not be ethical.

Limitations and Assumptions

Limitations

The first limiting factor in my study is the small sample size. The potential participants for this study came from a pool of 30 new hires during the 2012-2013 school year that had zero years of experience. Based on the study participation inclusion criterion, a further break down by position actually yielded a smaller population of potential participants. The inclusion criterion stated the participant must be a novice certified teacher in the district employed as a classroom teacher at the elementary level or as a teacher in a core academic area at the secondary level. Those participants lacking this criterion included a part time nurse, campus technology specialist, two physical education teachers, and a band instructor. Removing these potential participants from the pool of choices resulted in a pool of 25 potential participants.

The sample size was then further impacted due to unforeseen circumstances involving an amendment that was made to a date within my Project Application for the Use of Human Subjects Research. This setback resulted in a reduction in my original pool of participants that had provided written consent. The study participation exclusion criterion stated that the participant could not have prepared for or participated in an ARD meeting in a teaching position in any public school district. Based on this criteria, I lost

eight of my original participants (53%) because they had been required to participate in at least one ARD occurring between the September 4, 2012 and October 22, 2012, timeframe. One of the original participants was also unable to participate in the post-survey because he did not have an opportunity to be involved in an ARD meeting prior to the conclusion of my study.

An additional limitation to my study was the lack of similar research studies involving the use of training videos in which to compare my findings. I was able to locate several studies involving the use of online collaboration within district induction programs for novice teachers but research studies over the past five years involving the use of training videos to specifically support the novice teacher in the area of the ARD process were not found. However, a study completed by Bose (2012) did investigate if there was a difference in the understanding and implementation of a specific lesson planning approach for English Language Learners among in-service teachers who participated in an online professional development course to learn this approach. The groups were divided into two contexts, the Just-in-Time context and the Just-in-Case context.

The Just-in Case participant group was comprised of participants who did not currently have any English Language Learner students in the classroom. Therefore, the training they received was provided with the expectation that their learning would be used in the future and more than likely would not be applied to tasks in the immediate short-term.

The Just-in-Time participant group was made up of participants who had at least one English Language Learner in their class at the time of the training. Their training was based on the provision of information required to complete a job when that information is required.

Results of the study yielded no statistically significant difference in knowledge or application of the lesson planning approach between the learners who received the Just-in-Time training versus those who received the Just-in-Case training. Therefore the JIT training did not emerge as a better training strategy than the JIC training. This study was important to include in my study for future training purposes involving my Mock ARD Training Video. At the time, the video was only provided to participants who had an impending ARD. The video was not provided to participants who did not have at least one special education student in their classroom. This will be further discussed in the Recommendations section of this study.

Assumptions

One assumption made was that all participants came prepared to their first ARD meeting. The focus of my study was to determine which resource played a stronger role in the preparation of novice teachers for their first ARD meeting, based on the novice teacher's self-report. My study did not incorporate an evaluation tool of the novice teacher's actual performance in the ARD meeting.

Key Terms

1. Novice Teacher- any teacher having less than one school year of classroom teaching experience in a public school (Texas Education Agency, 1995b).

2. Attrition- the number of teachers in one year who are no longer teaching the following year (Texas Education Agency, 1995a).
3. Student Achievement- the status of subject-matter knowledge, understanding, and skills at one point in time (Linn, Bond, Carr, Darling-Hammond, Harris, Hess & Shulman, 2011, pg. 9).

Summary

In summary, my personal experience as an educational diagnostician and my recent role in the Beginning Educator and Mentor program has provided the impetus for this study. Novice teachers are faced with numerous “first experiences” their first year of teaching. Current research highlights the importance of implementing the appropriate supports to ensure novice teachers clear the many hurdles they are to face their first year of teaching. The use of administrative support, induction programs, learning teams, mentoring programs and staff development resources have all been found to be beneficial to the support and training of novice teachers. There is, however, little research or resources available to novice teachers as they prepare and participate in their first ARD meeting.

Therefore, this study will aim to determine which resource plays a stronger role in the preparation of novice teachers for their first ARD meeting: previous college preparation courses, involvement in a mentoring program, or a Mock ARD Training Video specific to the district’s current expectations.

The next chapter will provide an extensive literature review of the impact that novice teacher attrition can play within a district, what supports are available to them and the effectiveness of those supports.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

As discussed in chapter one, the loss of teachers in a district due to attrition can have a considerable adverse effect on an organization at various levels. Teacher attrition can result in the loss of district funds due to the need to retrain new employees on a revolving annual basis, damage to campus staff morale and most significantly, the loss of instruction and academic progress of students.

Many factors can play into a novice teacher's decision to stay or to leave the classroom which is why numerous studies have been completed discussing the importance of providing supports to novice teachers. A novice for the purposes of this study is defined in chapter one as any teacher having less than one school year of classroom teaching experience in a public school (Texas Education Agency, 1995b). Some causes for attrition of novice teachers include large caseloads, problems of behavior management (Busch, Pederson, Espin & Weissenburger, 2001), and excessive paperwork (Frank & McKenzie, 1993; Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff & Harniss, 2001; Miller, Brownell, & Smith, 1999). In addition, poor administrative support, the principal's administrative style, and organizational structure of the school can have a negative impact on a novice teacher's decision to leave the profession of teaching (Billingsley & Cross, 1991).

A critical review of fifteen empirical studies by Ingersol and Strong (2011) found that although elementary and secondary teaching entails concentrated interaction with

students, the actual work of teachers is completed essentially in isolation from their colleagues. Years of research has indicated that this seclusion can be especially difficult for novice teachers, who, on accepting a position in a school, are often left on their own to succeed or fail within the four walls of their own classrooms—often likened to a “lost at sea” or “sink or swim” experience (Johnson, 1990; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

Other researchers contend that novice teachers are often placed in the most challenging and difficult classroom and school assignments—analogueous to a trial by fire experience (Lortie, 1975; Sizer, 1992). A study by Ingall (2006) described the profession of teaching as an occupation that “cannibalizes its young” (p. 140).

To accomplish the purpose of this chapter, twelve studies that outline and describe, through both qualitative and quantitative methods, the influence that specific factors play in the preparation of novice teachers will be reviewed. The research question in this study involves the factors of the module (previous coursework or personal experience), the mentor, and multimedia (video); therefore, the literature reviewed will be broken into these three areas for discussion.

The primary studies reviewed in this chapter were predominantly found through an online search using the terms “novice teacher attrition”, “novice teacher retention”, “novice teacher preparation”, and “novice teachers and special education”. The timeframe for publication dates of the primary studies was set at ten years or current.

The Role of the Module

“The initial years of teaching are often difficult as the novice transitions from the role of a student, responsible for only his or her own learning, to that of a teacher, responsible for the learning of others” (Jones, 2009).

Katsiyannis, Zhang, & Conroy (2003) disclosed that every year colleges and universities graduate approximately 22,000 special education teachers which is considerably lacking when compared to the demand to fill existing and emergent teaching vacancies. A study by Connelly and Graham (2009) reported that at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year, almost 97% of all school districts reported at least one teaching vacancy in the field of special education, a total of 69,249 job openings nationwide (U.S. Department of Education [DOE], 2002) (p. 257). At the end of the 2009-2010 academic year, Bergert and Burnette (2001) approximated that 98% of school districts reported shortages of fully certified special education teachers; 33,000 special education positions were filled by teachers who were not fully certified, and 4,000 remained vacant altogether (p. 257). While research suggests that extensive pre-service student teaching is vital to the preparation and retention of both general education and special education novice teachers, the following study focuses on the novice special education teacher.

The purpose of Connelly and Graham’s (2009) study was to contrast the effects of the length of pre-service student teaching received against other variables that exist within a pre-service preparation program. These other variables included aspects of program coursework, self-report measures of a graduate’s competence, the existence of a

mentor, and demographic aspects when predicting the probability that a beginning special educator will remain in the field during the next academic year.

Data for this study were extracted from the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS) and its companion follow-up survey, the 2000-2001 Teacher Follow Up Survey (TFS). The SASS is the largest survey of U.S. elementary and secondary schools, with 42,086 teachers surveyed in 1999-2000. A total of 4,753 teachers were identified based on their reporting special education as their primary teaching assignment on the SASS. Out of that sample, 456 were surveyed in the following TFS, providing Connelly and Graham with information about whether those teachers who were teaching special education in 1999-2000 remained in the field during the subsequent year. Due to the fact that the research in this study was focused specifically on special education teachers who were early on in their career, of the 456 special educators surveyed in the TFS, only 168 teachers were selected for this study based on a report that they had been teaching less than 3 years when surveyed for the SASS.

This study investigated two related questions. First, were new special education teachers more apt to leave the field of education if they had less than ten weeks of student teaching, compared with special educators with more time in student teaching? Second, were there other features of preparation that could have played a role in the probability that a beginning special education teacher would leave teaching? Did teacher characteristics or school demographics play a role?

Using logistic regression analysis, survey responses of beginning special educators were analyzed. In order to answer the questions posed, the researchers took

the data from the SASS program and broke it down in a variety of ways. The first step was to note that of the 168 special educators in the analytic sample, just over a quarter left the field in the subsequent school year ($n = 43$, 25.6%). This group of past special educators were divided between "leavers," those teachers who left the profession entirely for another profession (also known as "exit attrition"), and "movers," those teachers who moved to another education-related field (in the SASS defined as teaching another subject or working in another education-related capacity in the school) (p. 260). The researchers then reviewed the teachers' reports on number of weeks in student teaching. In the SASS, this variable (which is referred to as "practice teaching" in the survey) measures the number of weeks of student teaching in four categories: a) none, b) 1 to 4, c) 5 to 9, and d) 10 or more. For both practical and methodological reasons, the researchers collapsed the first three of these groups together, creating a dichotomous variable coded 1 for those teachers with less than ten weeks of student teaching and 0 for those reporting ten weeks or more. The study also looked into other alternate traits of teacher preparation outside of student teaching and reported on these findings as well.

Quantitative data were collected and percentages were used to show the results. A table was constructed to present the results of the Schools and Staff Surveys for 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. Analysis of the data was based on the teacher's responses to the following questions: 1) Did your coursework include training in (a) selecting and adapting educational materials and (b) learning theory. Nearly all of the teachers in the analytic sample had had such preparatory coursework; 2) how well were you prepared in your first year of teaching to (a) handle management and discipline situations, (b) teach

your assigned subject matter, (c) plan lessons, and (d) select and adapt curriculum and instructional materials. Perceived level of preparation was rated from 1 (not at all prepared) to 4 (very well prepared) and 3) have you worked closely with a mentor teacher during their first year of teaching?

Since the outcome variable was a dichotomous variable reflecting whether teachers stayed in special education, the researchers used logistic regression analysis to model the probability of leaving special education as a function of their main predictors and controls. Specifically, Connelly and Graham explored the relationship between the probability of leaving special education and the defined predictors by fitting a grouping of logistic regression models that included first the main question variable, weeks of student teaching, then the additional preparation variables, and finally the control variables.

Findings from this study revealed that forty-nine of the 168 teachers in the analytic sample reported having less than ten weeks of student teaching, while the remaining 119 teachers reported ten or more weeks of student teaching. There were marked differences in the percentages of teachers who remained in special education between these two groups. Nearly 80% of the teachers reporting ten or more weeks of student teaching were still teaching special education one year later, compared with only 63% of the teachers reporting less than ten weeks of student teaching. Furthermore, only 6.7% of the teachers with more than ten weeks of practice teaching moved to another education-related field, and only 14.3% of the teachers with more than ten weeks of practice teaching left special education altogether. Among teachers with less than ten

weeks of student teaching, the percentages are much larger in both groups-16.3% of the less than ten weeks group moved to another education-related field and 20.4% left education altogether.

These percentages suggest that early career special education teachers with less than ten weeks of student teaching are more likely to no longer be teaching special education one year later than those teachers with more student teaching experience and that this relationship holds whether teachers leave the field by exit attrition or by moving to another education-related job.

In conclusion, it was found that ample pre-service student teaching experience has a strong effect on the probability that a beginning special educator will remain in the field for at least a second year of teaching. In addition, none of the aspects of teacher pre-service preparation or teacher or school demographics analyzed had an impact on attrition, when controlling for the number of weeks of student teaching.

The results of this study show that a) special educators who have less than ten weeks of pre-service student teaching are at a much greater risk of leaving than their counterparts with higher levels of student teaching and b) none of the other characteristics of teacher preparation and demographics diminished the effect of the number of weeks of student teaching.

These results offer preliminary evidence that should encourage both teacher educators and policy makers to continue to invest in rigorous programs of pre-service preparation that incorporate significant student teaching experiences. And there are

many pre-service preparation programs available to pre-service teachers as is evidenced in this next study which explores three of these possible options.

Since the 1980's, options for teacher preparation have been available to include the traditional undergraduate degree programs in education, as well as certification through alternative programs offered through regional education service centers, school districts, community colleges, private entities and universities. Teacher certification can also be sought through a post baccalaureate program. While these same options continue to exist today, a study by Herbert (2004) looked into the changing trends in the production of and retention of beginning teachers as they relate to the certification route taken. The three routes examined were the traditional undergraduate program, the alternative certification program and the post graduate program. In 1999, 66% of beginning teachers were prepared through the traditional, university undergraduate programs. By 2003, 45.5% of beginning teachers were prepared in undergraduate programs. In that same time period, the percent of initially certified teachers from alternative certification programs grew from 17% in 1999 to 34% in 2003, while 19% of beginning teachers in 2003 were prepared in post baccalaureate programs. The two nontraditional routes combined produced the majority of beginning teachers in the state of Texas in 2003.

The results of the study reflected that the growth of alternative certification programs is strong. Alternative certification programs are currently on track to become the primary source of new teachers in Texas within the next ten years and have already become the primary source of minority teachers and male teachers. They also produce

the majority of teachers in special education and bilingual education, as well as growing numbers of mathematics and science teachers (p. 2-3).

The purpose in including this study within this Record of Study is not to rate or compare what program a novice teacher may have pursued to become a teacher, but to instead focus on the understanding that preparation routes differ not only in who the program is preparing, but also in what subject area(s) they are preparing teachers to teach. Any problems or differences experienced by novice teachers coming into their first position from an alternative certification program may be dependent on where these teachers are placed, what they teach, and how much support they receive from their schools or districts. Data collected from this study promotes the importance of improving initial (i.e. first year after certification) employment in order to lower annual attrition.

While this report offered only an initial analysis of emerging trends in teacher production and retention in Texas, implications for further studies were recommended to include a more thorough analysis which could shed more light on what can be expected from preparation programs in the coming years, as well as how a district's induction program can be improved to meet new demands and respond to new challenges. Teacher preparation requires considerable time and resources on the part of students, programs, schools, districts, and state education agencies. It makes sense that public education stakeholders would be interested in maintaining teachers in the classroom for as long as possible once they have been trained by the district. In addition to being a

good return on investment, experienced teachers in the end will share their wisdom and skills with the public education system through their experiences.

In terms of methodology used in Herbert's (2004) study, the information provided was entirely descriptive in nature, and no analysis of causal relationships was conducted. This is contrast to the next study reviewed entitled, "An Analysis of the Features Contributing to the Attrition and Retention of Secondary Special Education Teachers in North Texas" by Harkey (2008). Harkey's study was able to dig deeper into the relationship between the preparation method and the novice teacher's performance.

Harkey (2008) provided research into determining the factors behind teacher retention and attrition by conducting a qualitative and quantitative study. The purpose of the study was to determine if the level and type of preparation for the field of teaching could be tied to whether a teacher was trained via a college preparatory program or alternatively certified. The participants consisted of two separate groups. One group involved college prepared teachers and another group involved alternative certification prepared teachers. The criteria to participate in the study entailed the teacher to be a secondary level teacher, therefore, teaching at grades 6-12. The teacher also had to have been teaching for no less than a full year and no more than ten years. 803 surveys were distributed to 157 college trained teachers and 77 alternatively certified teachers. Of the 317 surveys returned, 69 surveys from college trained teachers and 14 surveys from alternative certification teachers met the criteria to participate in the survey. The research questions guiding Harkey's study included determining if there was a significant difference between a certified teacher that had been prepared through a

college program versus an alternative certified teacher that was not trained or supported by a college or university program. Harkey also wanted to know if the factors impacting the decision to leave the field of special education were substantially different for certified teachers who were prepared through a college program from alternative certified teachers. Harkey compared the data collected at an individual question level. Overall the certified teacher prepared by a college and the alternative certified teachers' answers were not very different. One area that did reflect a measurable difference was the area of teacher preparation. The college prepared respondents indicated a much higher score. Surprisingly, another area reflected a meaningful difference between the two groups when asked about job satisfaction. The alternatively certified teachers had a higher score than the college prepared teacher signifying they were more satisfied with their teaching situation (Harkey, 2008). A limitation to the study may involve the researcher not digging deeper to account for the motivation involved when a person chooses to pursue an alternative certification. Often teachers who have sought alternative education have held other positions outside of the field of education. It is possible that the higher degree of job satisfaction can be linked to the fact that the teacher made an additional effort to pursue certification to hold the job of special education teacher and is, therefore, more satisfied with their accomplishment.

Overall in the area of pre-service preparation courses and programs, all three studies supported the significance of recognizing that not all novice teachers are coming from similar education and preparation backgrounds. While the district cannot control what route the novice teacher took to get to the front door of the school building, the

district can control the induction program and supports made available to all novice teachers as they cross the threshold of the school doors. That being said, the following section in this literature review will discuss one of the more significant supports that can be provided to novice teachers during their first year of teaching. As is evidenced in the abundance of studies and articles available to the researcher, the role of the mentor can be a powerful support system and can at times, mean the difference in a novice teacher's choice to stay or leave the profession of teaching. The subsequent articles will discuss different factors that can play a role in a mentor program and its ability to meet the needs of both the general education and special education novice teacher.

The Role of the Mentor

In a study by Gehrke and McCoy (2007), the problem being addressed involved the socialization of all special education teachers as well as the response of the novice special education teachers to a district induction program designed specifically with the beginning general education teacher in mind (Griffin, Winn, Otis-Wilborn, & Kilgore, 2003; Pugach, 1992). This study sought to capture the view of the workplace from the first year special education teacher's perspective across four different districts, both rural and urban. Each district in the study provided first year teachers access to the same structured, nationally recognized induction program executed in partnership with a large university in the Southwest. This particular program markets itself as a comprehensive, research-based teacher induction and mentoring program intended to meet the needs of the general population of beginning teachers (Kortman & Honaker, 2002).

Two speculative viewpoints framed this study. One recognized the transition from novice teacher to expert teacher as a process often thought to involve accruing three to five years of classroom experiences, having opportunities for teacher reflection, receiving formative feedback, and being closely supervised or mentored by a veteran teacher (Berliner, 1988; Fuller, 1969; Moir, 1999). It was expected that a newly graduated novice teacher would enter the classroom with a need for support and guidance relative to their particular role within the school and their assigned content area(s). A second hypothesis related to the process of teachers becoming assimilated into the professional culture of a school (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Lacey, 1985; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). The literature reviewed within this study also attempted to link effective assimilation into the workplace with positive views of the job which, in turn, escalated the likelihood of employees continuing in their current position (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Quaglia, Marion & McIntire, 1991).

Participants in this study included teachers in six statewide districts affiliated with a specific university to provide prescribed support for beginning teachers. Of the 43 questionnaires mailed to special education teachers, twelve were returned, for a response rate of 28%. Two of the respondents indicated that they had previous special education teaching experience in another setting for three years, therefore, the research team focused on data from only ten questionnaires. The ten questionnaires were completed by one male beginning special education teacher and nine female beginning special educators. The respondents, ranging in age from mid-twenties to early fifties, held special education certification in Specific Learning Disabilities, Cross-Categorical,

or Speech/Language Pathology, and one individual holding provisional certification in Special Education. Four participants taught in elementary schools, four in middle schools, and three participants were in high school settings. One, possibly two, of the beginning special education teachers taught in a self-contained setting with students with more severe disabilities; all others were in resource settings, as opposed to inclusive or co-teaching settings.

Participants were asked to respond to items related to typical concerns of special education teachers in their workplaces. Participants were also asked to describe their sources of information and support for general information as well as their sources when seeking assistance with special education procedures, accessing instructional materials, determining curriculum, and classroom organization/management. Questions in the follow-up interviews clarified written responses and allowed participants to expand on their answers (Johnson & Turner, 2003; Patton, 2002). Qualitative information collected from both instruments was analyzed to result in common themes and categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

To accomplish the researchers' desire to integrate the voice of the beginning teacher into the design, the study proposed a mixed methods design consisting of mailed questionnaires and individual interviews. The questionnaire and interview data yielded information on factors related to the working conditions of a particular group of beginning special education teachers across a variety of school settings. The findings were then examined with the framework of teacher socialization and workplace factors within the control of school personnel. Those factors were: a) interacting with

colleagues, b) accessing resources that support teacher practice, and c) having opportunities for professional development growth (Johnson'& Birkeland, 2003; Kletchtermans & Ballet, 2002).

As a result of the data collection and analysis, the novice teachers who chose to move from a special education position to a general education position made no mention of a mentor or other school personnel as being a resource of assistance for them in general, nor in specific areas such as procedures, policies, curriculum, instruction, or classroom management. Only 5% of responses from novice teachers who left the field of education referred to other special education teachers as a source of support. On the other hand, 27% of those teachers who chose to stay responded that other special education teachers were sources of support and information, 18% of their responses mentioned a mentor, and 14% of their responses referred to other school personnel in their building as supports (i.e. school psychologists, principals, and support staff). Analysis of the questionnaire responses also revealed that those teachers who left their teaching position more frequently included their sources of support to be the internet, former college personnel, materials from their undergraduate coursework and even a spouse as primary sources of support and information (Connelly and Graham, 2009). Some listed receiving "No Help". Neither of the two teachers interviewed who chose not to return to teaching had been assigned a mentor through their district or school. Interviews and contacts with each participants' school district substantiated that six of the seven teachers who chose to stay in the teaching profession another year were assigned a mentor during their first year as a special education teacher. Four of the five

teachers who stayed had an assigned special education mentor in their buildings whom they termed as easy to access. The one teacher who chose to stay despite not having been assigned a mentor reported that she had access to her department chair and a staff member whose role was to oversee and edit special education paperwork. These two staff members proved to be a substantial resource to the novice teacher and played a large role in her choice to teach another year.

In contrast to the previous study which dealt with an induction program created with the general education teacher in mind, the next study conducted by Mason and White (2006) identified through their research the impact that an induction program specific to special education needs could have on a novice teacher's experience. This study resulted after an observation was made that much of the research on mentoring had been either case study in nature or conducted with general educators only, similar to the study completed by Gehrke and McCoy.

Mason and White's current research was designed to measure the impact of mentoring that met specific criteria, including a focus on the unique needs and the concerns of special educators. Every year about 13.2% of special education teachers leave their positions. Six percent leave the field altogether while 7.2% of the special education teachers transfer to general education positions. Within the first 3 years of teaching, 29% of beginning teachers are projected to leave the profession; by the end of the 5th year, 39% leave the teaching field. Special education teachers are more vulnerable to stress or professional burnout than human service professionals. Miller, Brownell, and Smith (1999) conducted a study on the attrition of special education

teachers and concluded that teachers leave the field primarily for four main reasons: (a) they do not possess the necessary certification; (b) they transfer to another school or district; (c) they dislike the school climate; and (d) they experience high levels of stress.

The researchers felt that to understand the impact of mentoring for special educators, a consensus document prescribing guidelines for mentoring with novice special education teachers should be developed since special education has some unique concerns related to the working conditions and the roles and responsibilities of special educators.

The guidelines were based on an overall agreement with three assumptions: a) New teachers need knowledge, general support, and assistance with teaching skills; b) New teachers become more proficient and confident by increasing knowledge of school, community, and special education and by increasing specific teaching skills; and c) As teachers receive support and increase their knowledge and skills, they will have increased feelings of self-esteem and increased job satisfaction, which will ultimately result in higher levels of teacher retention.

The research was conducted at seven national sites over the course of two years. At the end of the final year of research, surveys were mailed with a self-addressed return envelope to all project participants across the seven sites including 244 new special education teachers and 253 mentors. The final sample used for this current study included the 147 new teachers and 172 mentors who returned surveys. The return rate was 60% for new teachers and 68% for mentors.

New teachers were asked to rate the overall influence that their mentor teacher, their building level administrators, and the entire mentoring program had on their decision to remain in special education and to what extent these three factors contributed to their overall success.

Overall, the new teachers surveyed reported needing assistance with stressors associated with burnout and attrition; the majority who needed help asked their mentors for help, and the majority generally felt that the help they received was moderately to very helpful (mean range from 3.92 to 4.31). While new teachers did not contribute their decisions to stay in special education or their level of success to the mentoring experience exclusively, they overwhelmingly believed their districts should continue to offer mentoring as a support. Additionally, the majority of new teachers and mentors were very satisfied with being a special education teacher and planned to return to teaching and/or mentoring the following year. Mentoring effectiveness was impacted by whether the mentor and new teacher were teaching in the same building, and teaching the same type of students, and teaching at the same grade level, as well as the level of administrative support they received.

As a result of this study, The Mentoring Induction Guidelines were created and implemented across the seven sites. This resulted in mentoring of new teachers according to basic criteria related to expectations for mentors, new special education teachers, mentor coordinators, and building principles. The Guidelines were implemented with a sample that represented an array of special education teaching conditions and when the data were analyzed for various sub-groups no differential

impact was noted for one group versus another. These data support the notion that the Mentoring Induction Guidelines may be a valuable tool for school districts and also teacher educators to use when transitioning pre-service teachers from their undergraduate teacher preparation programs to teaching responsibilities in multiple teaching environments across the continuum of services from inclusion to self-contained, as well as across all grade and content levels.

There were two major limitations in this study - both relating to the participants. First, to more effectively evaluate the impact of mentoring on first year special education teachers' stress levels, feelings of satisfaction, and levels of support, it would have been ideal to have all first year special education teachers and mentors participate. While participation in mentoring was mandatory at each of the sites, participation in the research component was voluntary. As a result, not all special education teachers and mentors were involved. Secondly, the researchers were not able to research pairs of new teachers and their mentors because one may have volunteered while the other did not. Being able to analyze how mentoring pairs worked together would have offered more valuable information on the function and relationship of mentoring.

The attrition rate of novice special education teachers is a growing concern. Researchers have identified numerous factors that contribute to the stress that many novice teachers experience and their subsequent attrition. If the necessary support from mentors, colleagues, and administrators is not in place, many novice teachers elect to leave the teaching profession. In the next study reviewed, Schlichte, Yssel & Merbler (2005) interviewed five novice teachers about their experiences in their first year of

teaching to determine whether there were any protective factors that might reverse attrition. A common thread in these teachers' stories was the powerful impact of relationships.

Schlichte, Yssel & Merbler's (2005) purpose was a) to examine the extent of collegial and administrative support and related stress factors perceived by first-year special education teachers and b) to determine whether there were any protective factors that made the first year of teaching successful. Insights garnered from interviews of first-year teachers might contribute to improving the first-year teaching experience and, consequently, improving teacher retention.

Five first-year special educators volunteered and were then interviewed individually using a semi-structured script. The teachers responded to open-ended questions about their first-year experience and the development of any mentoring relationships during that year. These interviews were audiotaped, transcribed, and analyzed for any emerging themes. The analysis from the individual interviews was then integrated with the analyses with subject commentary into vignettes.

In this study of the experiences of first year special education teachers, it was found that strongly forged relationships and the accompanying feelings of emotional well-being are protective factors and critical to retention. Until the primary need of belonging has been met, first-year teachers seem to find that they do not have enough of anything else to encourage them to stay.

As a result of this study, the following recommendations emerged. First, mentoring is an important element in seeking to establish a strong sharing relationship

between the mentor and first year teacher. Second, novice teachers should not need to rely on a single source of support, such as their mentor teachers. In addition to being supportive and helpful themselves, administrators need to foster a collegial environment within their campus for everyone to appear approachable. Third, the building administrators should be aware of the many stressors that novice teachers encounter. In addition to mentors, novice teachers would benefit from being assigned to buddy teachers to promote socialization. Training novice teachers to recognize the importance of establishing relationships with students is another skill addressed. Incremental progress and accomplishments of their own students could be springboards for connections that retain both special educators and their learners. Administrators should be cognizant that student-teacher relationships can be critical to student performance. When first-year special educators give up, so do their students. When students lose, there can be no winners. Teacher educators should encourage networking and collaboration among students in their classes. Each class within a professional education sequence can provide an opportunity to practice establishing cooperative and supportive bonds with a new set of "colleagues" or fellow students. These skills could be important during first-year teaching, and the development of a support network may be critical for success and professional satisfaction

Although the researchers were confident in the soundness of the methodology used in this study, the authors were still able to recognize that this study did have its limitations. First, the data were based on five respondents. The recurrent themes that emerged from these interviews, although consistent, should have been confirmed in a

larger pool of subjects. For example, it would have been interesting to replicate this study with novice teachers representing different geographical and socioeconomic conditions. Furthermore, an analysis incorporating interviews of more experienced teachers could have provided insight into the sequential subtleties of burnout.

To further support the role of the administrator as a support person as recommended in Schlichte, Yssel & Merbler's (2005) study, researchers, Otto and Arnold (2005) conducted a study to capture the level of administrator support perceived by special education teachers in South Texas. The literature on teacher retention supports the idea that the "lack of administrative support" is a central cause for novice teachers to leave the teaching profession. This study examined the issues related to administrator support recognized by over 200 special education teachers in South Texas. According to the researchers, outcomes from this study are consistent with those presented in the literature at the time of the study.

A questionnaire was used to collect the data and consisted of two sections for the respondents to complete. The first section was a demographic section that asked for gender, number of years in teaching, current position, and information concerning educational level. The second section contained statements to respond to using a Likert Scale.

The data was analyzed using the responses of "strongly disagree," "disagree," "neutral," "agree," and "strongly agree." The respondents' number of years in the teaching field was also taken into account; all respondents had five or more years of

teaching experience. Quantitative data were collected and percentages were used to show the results within a table.

Out of the 228 respondents, 29% of the respondents "Strongly Agreed" they had administrator support; 40% reported they had administrator support, 8 % "Disagreed" that they had any support from their administrator and 4% actually felt so strongly there was a lack of support from their administrator that they marked "Strongly Disagreed". 17% of those respondents were "neutral" on the question and two percent (2%) did not respond.

Implications from this study are in line with other studies reviewed within this Record of Study in that all researchers support the need to examine all reasons why special education teachers leave the field of education. Even more important though, is the realization that in this study experienced special educators seemed to perceive their administrators as supportive which was in sharp contrast to the responses from special education teachers who had less than five years of experience. While the reason for this difference between beginning and experienced teachers was not considered in this study, further study may be needed to determine the reason for the distinct difference in views of administrator support. Olivarez and Arnold question if it is possible that beginning special education teachers are so overwhelmed by the responsibilities of the job, that they find the lack of support from administrators an "excuse" for stress-related complaints or perhaps it is just that as special education teachers develop experience in the school, they become more aware of administrative responsibilities and how those

administrative responsibilities interact with the education of students with disabilities (p. 258).

The first three studies in this section discussed the importance of the relationship between the mentor and novice teacher. The following study by Carver and Katz recognizes the importance of the personal connection but also takes into account the true role of the mentor which is to prepare the novice to teacher to be a stronger teacher as they develop throughout their first year of teaching.

Carver and Katz (2004) address the role of the mentor in assisting the novice teacher with poor teaching abilities. The majority of novice teachers who enter the classroom for the first time, come prepared to teach children, but some do not. Those novice teachers who enter the classroom unprepared or lacking a strong teaching ability will struggle throughout their first year of teaching. Many will leave the profession voluntarily and others will not have their contracts renewed. Regardless of how they exit, it cannot be ignored that the victims of the novice teacher's first year are the students that were in their classroom. As reported in the National Commission for Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) (1996) report, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, "The problem of teacher incompetence represents a tiny fraction of the overall teaching force, but in each case where it is left unaddressed, it undermines public confidence and harms hundreds of students" (p. 100).

The participants in this particular study included one teacher mentor and three novice teachers. The study initially was a national study on teacher induction and took place across three locations across the United States. The mentor in this study was

located at the California site and data was collected over a two year period through a formal interview, three observations, a collection of audiotapes that the mentor recorded of his work with the novice teachers and numerous informal observations and conversations. Six interviews and four classroom observations with each of the three novice teachers also took place and focused on the mentor's work with each of the novice teachers. The guiding research questions in this study addressed the mentor's role in providing adequate support to the novice teacher.

The first research question was "How does Scott enact his role as a mentor?" The second research question, "What learning opportunities does Scott offer his novices?" and the third research question asked, "What enables or constrains Scott's approach to mentoring?" The interview data was coded using the three research questions and then the researchers attempted to identify patterns and irregularities across all three novice teacher's interactions with the mentor. What emerged was that the mentor worked off the belief that the novice teacher knew and could articulate what they needed in terms of help. The constraint identified was the role of the relationship between a mentor and the novice teacher. The relationship is built on trust and so the thought was that critiquing the work of the novice teacher could put a strain on that relationship.

Implications of this study yielded the need for specific training of mentors in providing strategies to their novice teachers, as well as a tool to assist in assessing the novice teacher's performance. In addition, a change in expectations of the novice

teacher must take place. Novice's must be held accountable for their professional standards and address their identified areas of weakness.

Ultimately, the researchers concluded that mentors have to be willing to take on a more assessment-oriented role, holding themselves and their novices up to public professional standards and taking responsibility for identifying and trying to change ineffective and inequitable practices. Had Scott felt a stronger sense of professional accountability that was supported by a professional mentor community, he may have taken a different approach in his mentoring practice (Carver and Katz, 2004, p. 461).

While all coming from a slightly different angle, each of the study's findings contribute to the growing body of research that attempts to describe effective support for novice teachers and to identify the specific workplace factors that may relate to teacher job satisfaction and subsequently teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson, 2004; Luekens, Lyter & Fox, 2004).

Each study's findings hold implications for individuals responsible for teacher development and the administration of school funds and resources. Although research relating to the effective induction of beginning special education teachers is growing, many districts, especially those in rural settings, continue to struggle with finding available persons and money to implement an extensive or structured program (Brownell, Ross, Colon, & McCallum, 2005; Gehrke & McCoy, 2007). Requiring and financing support for beginning teachers, whether urban or rural, is a recommended area of focus for policy makers addressing teacher shortages and teacher retention (McClure, Redfield & Hammer, 2003).

Keeping that in mind, while the face to face contact with a mentor has documented benefits and positive outcomes with regards to its role in novice teacher retention, districts who do not have the staff to provide a mentor to each novice teacher or who may not currently have a strong induction program in place, may choose to look at different ways to provide support and professional development training in identified areas of need through a multimedia approach.

The literature chosen for review in this next section will provide studies not only on the role that multimedia can play in the acquisition of new knowledge, it will also provide studies that outline the impact the role that increased special education legal requirements and additional responsibilities involved in working with students with special needs can have on a novice teacher. These studies are included in this section because the Mock ARD Training Video discussed in this Record of Study's sole purpose is to address specific legal requirements and special education paperwork as they pertain to an ARD meeting.

The Role of Multimedia

While a specific study on the use of multimedia with teachers could not be found, a study by Chambers, Cheung, Maddin, Slavin and Gifford (2006) sought to identify and further support the positive impact that the use of multimedia can have on the instruction of new concepts when paired with narrative or written text with students. All schools in the study implemented the Success for All reading program but only the experimental group used the multimedia content in the program. The control group did not.

The expectation was that the addition of the embedded multimedia content to a beginning reading program would enhance children's reading achievement.

The researchers used a cluster randomized trial design with random assignments of schools to treatments. Ten elementary schools were involved; 450 first grade students (394 completed pre- and posttests) and the data were analyzed with hierarchical linear modeling.

The results of the study only partially supported the expectation that the addition of the embedded multimedia content to a beginning reading program would enhance children's reading achievement. Only one of the four outcome measures, Word Attack, showed significant experimental-control differences but this was to be expected as three out of the four multimedia segments focused primarily on letter sounds and sound blending which are key components of word attack.

Much research is needed to further understand the effects of multimedia and beginning reading instruction. Focus audiences could be second language learners or teachers and how multimedia impacts their instructional methods.

Similar to Chambers, Cheung, Maddin, Slavin and Gifford's (2006) research, a study by Schafer (2008) on the use of teacher video clubs and their role in changing teacher discourse and ultimately resulted in improving teaching practice, supports the impact that watching an authentic activity can result in positive reflection and learning.

In addition to the many skills novice teachers must learn at the beginning of their teaching career, to a degree the novice teacher must also hold an understanding of the complex state and federal laws, regulations, and policies affecting special education

programs (Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2007). For the purposes of this Record of Study, the next four studies simply bring to light the need for additional support for all novice teachers due to the added responsibilities involved in working with students with special needs.

The purpose of Nance and Calabrese's study (2009) was to describe the reasons current or former tenured special education teachers in a Local Education Agency chose to remain or leave their special education teaching positions through the theoretical perspectives of organizational learning and organizational culture.

The study aimed to describe the influence of increased legal requirements on current or former tenured special education teacher attrition or retention by reporting their reasons for staying or leaving.

A qualitative multiple case study of two units of analysis was conducted through a constructionist epistemology. Data were collected from 40 current and former tenured special education teachers through focus groups, semi-structured interviews, the Left Hand and Right-Hand Column Case Method, and review of appropriate documents. The data collected were analyzed using text analysis software, content analysis, and pattern matching.

As a result of this study four salient findings were: a) current tenured special education teachers want to be listened to and have their needs considered; b) current tenured special education teachers feel overwhelmed by the workload related to state assessments; c) current and former tenured special education teachers believe that legally-required changes affected them in practice; and d) current and former tenured

special education teachers perceive that time requirements for administrative tasks reduce time for student services.

In conclusion, the study described the impact increased legal requirements had on the retention and attrition of tenured special education teachers. The researchers discovered the depth and breadth of the levels of frustration felt by current and former tenured special education teachers who were frustrated regarding perceived ever-changing and increasing legal requirements that directly affected their work. The deep levels of frustration, in many instances, led to a growing sense of alienation—a separation of the worker from his or her work. While the findings were conducted in one large special education agency; they may or may not have been generalizable to other situations, and any notion of transferability was left to the reader.

Similarly, the purpose of a study by Plash & Piotrowski (2006) was to investigate issues that relate to the attrition, migration, and turnover of special education teachers in Baldwin County in southeast Alabama. All participants were teachers in the county school system and served special education students in their areas of expertise.

A packet was sent, during the spring of 2004, to each of the 260 special education teachers employed by the county. A total of 117 teachers consented to participate in the survey. Of these, 70 participants were regarded as *highly-qualified teachers* and served as the sample in this study.

A 63-item instrument was chosen that would capture issues specific to the retention and attrition of special education teachers. The questionnaire measured topics regarding job satisfaction, administration responsiveness, pre-employment preparation,

and specific reasons for terminating employment using a 4-point Likert rating scale: 1= not very important, 2 =somewhat important, 3 = very important, 4 = critical.. As a result of the data collection, the following reasons, ranked by degree of importance , were provided by the special education teachers for wanting to leave the workplace: a) class size or caseload size, b) excessive paperwork, c) demands associated with IDEA compliance, d) inadequate planning time, e) wide diversity of students, f) lack of administrative knowledge, g) lack of parental or community support, h) lack of administrative support, i) limited opportunities to provide input, j) lack of collegial support, and k) inadequate preparation of staff development.

The results indicated that stress due to the demands of the job, insufficient planning time, broad range of student needs, class size/caseload size, excessive paperwork, and demands associated with IDEA compliance were the key reasons that special education teachers provided for leaving the workplace. Despite the identified stressors, several supports emerged as a result of the data collection that served as a buffer for continued retention. Teachers in the current sample expressed the view that they had adequate staff development and were provided adequate opportunities for input. In addition, these respondents held very favorable views toward peer support.

The highly-qualified special education teachers in this study indicated that the two most important criteria contributing to a potential decision to leave the field were excessive paperwork and stress created by demands of the job.

Nance (2008) also completed a study to determine the impact changes mandated by federal and state laws play in teacher retention. Nance (2008) hypothesized that the

increase in legal requirements brought on by special education law has impacted the level of attrition of tenured special education teachers in Goddard, Kansas. Data to support this hypothesis was gathered through a variety of means. Focus groups, semi-structured interviews, Left and Right Hand Column Case Method and a review of appropriate documents were all used to obtain data to support Nance's hypothesis. The data was analyzed in two groups, one group involving the tenured teacher who remained teaching and the other group involved the teachers who had left the field of teaching. Contrary to national statistics that reflect a higher rate of attrition for teachers who have taught less than five years, in this study Nance reports that 40% of the teachers that left the field of teaching had tenured status. Nance attributes that attrition to the recent change in legal requirements. Legal requirements are defined by Nance (2008) to include 1) an increase in paperwork, 2) involvement of Focused Assistance and Monitoring (FAM), and 3) increased licensing requirements tied to the mandate for highly qualified teachers. Nance enlisted forty teachers in her study. Twenty two of the participants were current special education teachers and eighteen were former special education teachers. After analyzing the data collected through the various means listed, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions. Current special education teachers wanted to be listened to and have their needs considered, felt overwhelmed by the workload related to the state assessments, believed that legally required changes affected their practice and that the time requirements for administrative tasks reduced the time for student services (Nance, 2008).

A study by Pellerin (2008) will close out this chapter and is a strong example of the factors discussed throughout this literature review at work in a teacher's decision to leave the field of special education teacher.

Pellerin enlisted only one participant in his qualitative study. Ann, a thirty year old female who had permanently left the field of special education after only five years of teaching, was enlisted to define the factors involved in making her decision to leave the field of special education. Pellerin attempted to bring a deeper level of research to this issue by performing a qualitative study involving a former special education teacher's perceptions of her career. It was the intent of the researcher to take the information to compel changes necessary to improve teaching situations. It was the purpose of this study to provide more insight into the experiences that influenced this individual to leave the field of education all together. The participant, Ann, was posed with a series of questions that were intended to establish the factors that played a part in her decision to leave the profession of special education, what role administrative support played in her decision, if salary was a part of the equation, and what function the changes in special education law served in her decision to retire from special education. The researcher collected data via a written log where notes were taken over a course of three ninety minute interviews. The information collected was then written out and compared to the current literature on teacher retention. Similar to the studies reviewed in this Record of Study, the respondent shared that she did not feel fully prepared by her college program in the areas of IEP writing, behavior plans, and facilitating and implementing inclusion into the general education classrooms. The respondent also

shared that she attended a nonstandard teacher preparation that was much shorter than a four year program. The data collection reflected in the article by Harkey (2008) supports that certified special education teachers that have been prepared through an alternative method do not feel as prepared for the classroom teaching experience. Studies show that teachers that are prepared by a four to five year program stay longer in the classroom (Pellerin, 2008). The respondent shared that her administration was very supportive but the time and money needed to fund induction programs and mentors often played a part in retaining first year teachers. The amount of paperwork involved in the special education program was overwhelming at times. Ann tried not to bring work home therefore establishing a balance in her life between work and home. Ann stated that many novice teachers are not able to do this thus increasing burnout. Having the support and understanding of her general education peers was also important to Ann's desire to stay in the field of special education. The district she worked in fully embraced inclusion and establishing a strong working relationship with the general education teachers was not always easy. Being familiar with special education law and realizing the knowledge parents had about their rights as parents of students with disabilities caused a lot of anxiety for Ann. Ann attributed her anxiety to the pressures from the federal and state departments of education (Pellerin, 2008). Nance's study (2008) would support this factor. In conclusion, the data collected from Ann through the interview process was used to answer all five of Pellerin's research questions (2008).

Administrative support and salary were not factors in Ann's decision to leave the field of special education. Instead Ann ultimately left the field of special education and teaching

because of the excessive paperwork, increases in requirements and credentials due to changes in special education law and a lack of respect and understanding from her colleagues in general education.

Summary

Due to the alarming rate of teacher attrition each year and the negative impact it has on student learning, administrative training and human resource costs, there have been many studies completed on the factors behind teacher retention. One could easily choose a single factor and conduct a literature review. The purpose of this literature review though, was to identify the various factors involved in novice teacher retention and the level of impact each factor plays in the teacher's decision to either remain or leave the field of education. The hope is that once more is known about what causes teachers to leave, then more can be done to retain the experienced strong teachers. Based on the studies reviewed, the highest percentage of teachers leaving are novice teachers due to lack of preparation, administrative support, respect from general education colleagues, and changes in the special education law affecting the amount of paperwork and certification requirements. So much of a new teacher's perception of what teaching will be like is often considerably skewed by reality. Ensuring that novice teachers are supported and possess the tools to be successful in the classroom before they enter and after they arrive is very important in creating strong seasoned teachers that remain in the field of education.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND RESULTS

Rationale for Mixed Methods

All researchers' inquiries need a philosophical framework to guide their design and implementation. Underlying assumptions differ for philosophical frameworks that reflect the underlying ideas and beliefs about the role of the research study in understanding a particular educational context. Researchers' intentions to do research are deeply rooted in their own personal experiences, their culture, and their history. A researcher needs to be able to articulate and defend the choices made about the research methods chosen to conduct research. To defend the chosen methods, the researcher must be familiar with three predominant worldviews most important in field-based studies: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches. The researcher must also be able to single out mixed methods as most appropriate, due to its pragmatic (practical) approaches. I used a mixed methods approach because it is the most appropriate approach in terms of the field-based context and question(s) I have chosen to investigate in my current research. This chapter embeds information about two other predominant worldviews (i.e., quantitative and qualitative) to convince my reader that mixed methods is indeed the most appropriate approach for this field-based research study. The context and question(s) are most appropriate for a mixed approach because I am interested in knowing more about the factors involved in preparing novice teachers for his or her first ARD committee meeting. The questions asked in the follow-up interviews further

clarified survey responses and allowed participants to expand on their answers (Johnson & Turner, 2003; Patton, 2002). Qualitative information collected from both instruments was analyzed to result in common themes and categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Both Creswell (2003) and Maxwell (1996) stated qualitative research was advantageous when the data emerging involved interpretation and inductive reasoning.

Miles and Huberman (1994) noted the following five philosophical research tasks of a qualitative study:

1. It is conducted through an intense contact and/or prolonged contact with a field or life situation.
2. The researcher's role is to gain a holistic overview of the context under study.
3. The researcher attempts to capture data on the perceptions of local actors "from the inside" through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding, and of suspending or bracketing preconceptions about the topics under discussion.
4. Reading through materials, the researcher may isolate certain themes and expressions that can be reviewed with informants, but that should be maintained in their original forms throughout the study.
5. Most analysis is accomplished with words. The words can be assembled, sub-clustered, broken into semiotic segments. They can be organized to permit the researcher to contrast, compare, analyze and bestow patterns upon them. (p. 6-7)

The context of my study involved novice teachers in their first year of teaching who were required to participate in their first ARD meeting. I was interested in knowing the statistics involved in the degree that the support of previous college preparation courses, involvement in a mentoring program, and/or a Mock ARD Training Video viewing played in preparing the novice teacher for his or her first ARD committee meeting. I was also interested if the participant's answers were aligned by grades taught, as well as any differences due to the disability category of the student being discussed in the ARD, the student's current performance and the teacher's role in the student's instructional day. My research incorporated pre- and post-surveys and interviews with novice teachers in various departments and grade levels after participating in their first ARD committee meeting. Due to the small sample size available of novice special education teachers in the district in one school year (three in 2012-2013), this study involved all novice teachers during the 2012-2013 school year.

Data Collection

Ideas for my interview questions were inspired by a study recently completed by Rose Van Alstine (2010). The purpose of Van Alstine's qualitative study was to identify factors causing special education teacher attrition and to then identify courses of action for K-12 leaders to improve special education teacher retention. Van Alstine's research question investigated why special education teachers were choosing to leave the field of special education within 3 to 5 years of entering the field within the case study district. Interview responses from twenty former special educators were analyzed resulting in four emergent themes as primary factors to improve special education teacher retention.

While my study will encompass a mixed methods approach and involve only novice teachers, I liked the format of her interview questions and chose to use them as a resource.

Joyce Alexander's (2010) study provided me the alternate perspective as her study focused only on teachers with two or fewer years of experience. An interview protocol was also used in her mixed methods approach and used as a resource.

Quantitative Methods for Data Collection

Quantitative approaches were used in my mixed methods study when I collected data about personal identification information of the novice teachers who participated in my study which included age, gender, race, educational background, grades taught and the participant's current teaching position. The responses to specific Likert-style questions also yielded quantitative information on both the pre- and post-surveys.

My data collection tool was a pre and post Likert survey created with Qualtrics Survey Software and distributed to all participants via their employee email (See Appendix D and Appendix E). The pre-survey consisted of seventeen questions and the post-survey consisted of twenty questions. Five of the questions on both surveys focused on the novice teacher's perception of the mentor's role in preparing him or her for their first ARD meeting. The pre-survey inquired into the novice teacher's expectations of their mentor's abilities to meet their needs as a first-year teacher since the novice teachers had not worked with their mentor prior to the start of school. On the post-survey, the five questions determined whether or not the novice teacher's mentor met their initial expectations and needs. At the start of the school year, the video had not

been viewed so the second set of five questions on the pre-survey determined what the novice teachers knew of the ARD process and their role within this process. After viewing the video and participating in their first ARD, the second set of five questions in the post-survey reassessed the novice teacher's understanding of their role in the ARD process and how their understanding was helped by the video. The third set of five questions on the pre-survey determined if the novice teacher came into their first year of teaching with some exposure to an ARD meeting through a college course, and if so, its impact. Post-survey questions in this area sought to capture if their pre-service course experience helped the novice teacher anticipate what they experienced in their first ARD. The final two questions on the pre-survey served to provide an opportunity for the participant to indicate if they would like to participate in an individual face to face or focus group interview. The interviews were optional to all participants. The final five questions were included only on the post-survey and served to obtain specifics about the particular ARD situation, since they were not all alike. This additional information provided more depth and added to the researcher's understanding of the novice teacher's individual responses to the pre- and post-survey questions.

Table 1 and Table 2 provide a list of the questions asked of the participants on the Pre-ARD Survey and Post-ARD Survey. A copy of the actual survey can also be found as Appendix D and Appendix E.

| For each item, please check the appropriate response that indicates the item's level of importance to you as it relates to your preparation for your first ARD meeting. | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| The Mentor | | | | | |
| My mentor will assist me in understanding the ARD paperwork. | | | | | |
| My mentor will assist me in how to teach students with disabilities. | | | | | |
| My mentor will assist me in how to accommodate for students with disabilities as they relate to my classroom. | | | | | |
| My mentor will assist me in how to talk with parents of students with disabilities. | | | | | |
| My mentor will assist me in how to prepare for my first ARD meeting. | | | | | |
| The Media | | | | | |
| I need to understand how to read ARD paperwork. | | | | | |
| I need to be knowledgeable about how to teach students with disabilities; I need to understand about the thirteen recognized disabilities. | | | | | |
| I need to understand my role in talking with parents about their child's progress. | | | | | |
| I need to understand how to accommodate for students with disabilities. | | | | | |
| I need to understand my role in the ARD meeting. | | | | | |

Table 1 The Novice Teacher & the First ARD Meeting Pre-Survey

| For each item, please check the appropriate response that indicates the item's level of importance to you as it relates to your preparation for your first ARD meeting. | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| The Module | | | | | |
| I have had previous experience with reading ARD paperwork. | | | | | |
| I have had previous coursework that prepared me for working with students with disabilities. | | | | | |
| I have had previous instruction in talking with parents about their child's progress. | | | | | |
| I have had previous coursework that prepared me for providing accommodations to students with disabilities. | | | | | |
| I have had previous instruction in the ARD process. | | | | | |
| Other Participation Opportunities | | | | | |
| Would you like to participate in an individual interview with the researcher? | | | | | |
| Would you like to participate in a focus group interview? | | | | | |

Table 1 Continued.

| For each item, please check the appropriate response that indicates your level of agreement as it related to your preparation for your first ARD meeting. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| The Mentor | | | | | |
| My mentor assisted me in understanding the ARD paperwork. | | | | | |
| My mentor assisted me in how to teach students with disabilities. | | | | | |
| My mentor assisted me in how to accommodate for students with disabilities. | | | | | |
| My mentor assisted me in how to talk with parents of students with disabilities. | | | | | |
| My mentor assisted me in how to prepare for my first ARD meeting. | | | | | |
| The Media | | | | | |
| I understand how to read ARD paperwork as it relates to my classroom. | | | | | |
| I am more knowledgeable about how to teach students with disabilities; I understand more about the thirteen recognized disabilities. | | | | | |
| I understand my role in talking with parents about their child's progress. | | | | | |
| I understand how to accommodate for students with disabilities. | | | | | |
| I understand my role in the ARD meeting. | | | | | |

Table 2 The Novice Teacher & the First ARD Meeting Post-Survey

| The Module | | | | | | |
|---|--|----------|--|--|--|--|
| My previous experience with reading ARD paperwork assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting. | | | | | | |
| My previous coursework that addressed working with students with disabilities assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting. | | | | | | |
| My previous instruction in talking with parents about their child's progress assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting. | | | | | | |
| My previous coursework prepared me for providing accommodations to students with disabilities and assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting. | | | | | | |
| My previous instruction in the ARD process assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting. | | | | | | |
| Additional Questions: | | Comments | | | | |
| What levels of disability(ies) did the student in your ARD possess? Please describe. | | | | | | |
| Was this an Annual, Review, Transfer, Transition, or Failure ARD? Please describe. | | | | | | |
| What types of supports did the student in question receive? Please describe. | | | | | | |
| Was the student being successful in their current program at the time of the ARD meeting? Please describe. | | | | | | |

Table 2 Continued.

| | |
|---|--|
| In what capacity do you work with the student being discussed in the ARD? | |
|---|--|

Table 2 Continued.

This data alone was not sufficient for answering the research question because quantitative approaches alone only allow the researcher to answer close-ended questions that relate variables together. While I was able to determine the order in which the participants ranked the three supports, I was limited in my ability to determine what was behind each ranking and what could be done to improve the supports if it was determined that changes needed to be made in the current CISD indication program. As a result, I looked to a qualitative approach to find the factors that played a role in the participant's answers to the surveys.

Qualitative Methods for Data Collection

Qualitative approaches were used in my mixed methods study when I collected data about teacher's feelings and perceptions about the preparation and support they received prior to entering the ARD committee meeting setting. Qualitative research allowed me to study my participants from a human perspective and not just as a name or a number on a data report. While quantitative research told me that a certain number of novice teachers felt the support from their mentor played a larger role in their preparation for their first ARD meeting, a qualitative research approach was able to tell me why they felt that way.

Table 3 provides a list of the qualitative questions asked of the participants in the Post-ARD interview. A copy of the actual survey can also be found as Appendix G.

| |
|--|
| <u>Role of the Module</u> |
| 1. Prior to your first ARD meeting, had you had any experience with the ARD process? (I.e. participated on behalf of yourself, a family member or a friend? In a practicum experience?) |
| 2. Prior to your first ARD meeting, had you participated in college course work on the ARD process? |
| 3. Prior to your first ARD meeting, had you participated in professional development sessions on the ARD process? |
| 4. If you answered yes to any of the previous two questions, did you feel prepared to participate in the ARD process with those experiences alone? Why or why not? |
| <u>Role of the Mentor</u> |
| 1. What concerns or needs specific to special education were met through the mentoring process? |
| 2. What concerns or needs specific to special education did you have that you hoped would be met through the mentoring process that were not met? |
| 3. What types of topics did your mentor discuss with you regarding special education? |
| 4. What did you hope you and your mentor would discuss with regards to special education? (Possible topics) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Incorporating accommodations into lesson plans -Classroom management skills for students with disabilities -Discipline involving students with disabilities -Classroom expectations for students with disabilities -Holding parent conferences with parents of students with disabilities -Understanding your role in the ARD paperwork -Understanding your role in the ARD meeting -Other (be specific) |
| 1. What types of support or strategies did your mentor use that provided you with respect to special education? |
| <div> <div>_____</div> <div>Allowing me to observe other classrooms</div> </div> <div> <div>_____</div> <div>Strategies modeled by the mentor</div> </div> <div> <div>_____</div> <div>Discussing my questions/concerns with my mentor</div> </div> <div> <div>_____</div> <div>Having my mentor observe my lesson and discuss my teaching</div> </div> <div> <div>_____</div> <div>Analyzing student work with my mentor</div> </div> <div> <div>_____</div> <div>Providing me support in preparation for my first ARD meeting</div> </div> <div> <div>_____</div> <div>Other strategies (describe) _____</div> </div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>_____</div> |

Table 3 The Novice Teacher & the First ARD Meeting - Individual Interview

| <u>The Role of the Media (Mock ARD Training Video)</u> |
|--|
| 1. What levels of disability(ies) did the student in your ARD possess? Please describe. |
| 2. Was this an Annual, Review, Transfer, Transition, or Failure ARD? Please describe. |
| 3. What types of supports did the student in question receive? Please describe. |
| 4. Was the student being successful in their current program at the time of the ARD meeting? Please describe. |
| 5. In what capacity do you work with the student being discussed in the ARD? |
| 6. Do you feel that understanding your role in the ARD process is relevant to you as a novice teacher? |
| <u>Significance of Supports</u> |
| Rank the significance of the support as it played a role in your understanding of the components of the ARD process. (1 indicates most supportive; 3 indicates least supportive) |
| _____ the Mentoring Program |
| _____ the Mock ARD Training Video |
| _____ your past personal experiences with the ARD process |

Table 3 Continued.

This qualitative data alone, however, was not sufficient to answer the research question in my proposed study because one of the elements of a qualitative approach is that it may involve participant or researcher bias. The goal of my study is to inform my district's Director of Staff Development, Director of Special Education and Campus Administrators of the factors necessary to prepare novice teachers for their first ARD committee meeting. In order to thoroughly meet this goal, I had to be able to demonstrate that there was a need for a change or that the current supports should continue. This information is essential if my district's Director of Staff Development, Director of Special Education or Campus Administrators are to take heed and aspire to make changes should they be deemed necessary. It was important to me to catch the attention of my audience with statistics initially. Only once their attention was obtained,

would I be able to provide valuable information that could help the district or a specific campus in avoiding a situation where a novice teacher came to an ARD committee meeting unprepared.

Mixed Methods

While quantitative data provided information about the order in which the participants ranked the three supports, the depth of information about why they felt that one support was a better resource to them than another was enhanced when coupled with qualitative information. Giving up the strict assumptions of either quantitative or qualitative approaches, I therefore adopted a mixed methods approach. This approach provided me with the flexibility to collect, analyze, and synthesize data to yield more knowledge about the varied factors involved in preparing the novice teacher for his or her first ARD meeting than by adopting either one of the two stricter approaches would allow. I understand that I gave up generalizability, a major goal in quantitative methods, in order to understand particular aspects of this particular context in more depth.

The question of finding a higher number of responses for one support system over another in one type of instructional arrangement versus another could only partially be answered with numbers. Providing my participants with an opportunity to ask themselves and to share why they felt that one support was a better resource to them than another served to fully answer each question. The ability to mix these approaches provided a more comprehensive answer to my research question because it not only allowed me to identify which supports were viewed as helpful in preparing for an ARD

committee meeting but it also allowed me to identify what made that support so beneficial.

Context

The participants for this study were from a pool of 30 new hires that had zero years of experience. Based on the study participation inclusion criterion, a further break down by position actually yielded a smaller population of participants. The inclusion criterion stated the participant must be a novice certified teacher in the district employed as a classroom teacher at the elementary level or as a teacher in a core academic area at the secondary level. Those participants lacking this criterion included a part time nurse, campus technology specialist, two physical education teachers, and a band instructor. Removing these potential participants from the pool of choices resulted in a pool of 25 possible participants. The remaining possible participants included 15 novice elementary teachers, four novice middle school teachers, three novice high school teachers, one novice high school special education teacher in a self-contained classroom, one novice elementary special education teacher in a resource and inclusion model classroom and one speech therapist who was assigned to an elementary campus.

Participant Selection

My first contact with the novice teachers hired by the district for the 2012-2013 school year took place on August 10, 2012, via an email introducing myself and the purpose of my study. Potential participants were provided literature driving the need for my study and what their role would be should they choose to participate. A consent

form was attached for their review and an indication of when they would have an opportunity to meet with me face to face and have any of their questions answered.

My second contact with all of the novice teachers hired by the district for the 2012-2013 school year took place on August 14, 2012. During this visit, I spoke to the 2012-2013 novice teachers hired by the district during a New Teacher luncheon organized by the Beginning Educator and Mentor program supervisor. This setting allowed me an opportunity to again introduce myself, the purpose of my research and to request their participation in the study. I was able to provide information via a brief power point presentation and answer questions at the time of the presentation. I was also able to provide the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program Consent Form and personally answer any questions with regards to the participant's role in the study.

| Name | Subject Area | Level Taught |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Participant A | Speech Language Pathologist | Elementary |
| Participant B | Fourth Grade | Elementary |
| Participant C | Second Grade | Elementary |
| Participant D | Third Grade | Elementary |
| Participant E | Fourth Grade | Elementary |
| Participant F | Kindergarten | Elementary |
| Participant G | Resource Teacher | Elementary |
| Participant H | Fourth Grade | Elementary |

Table 4 Initial Consents

| Name | Subject Area | Level Taught |
|---------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Participant H | Fourth Grade | Elementary |
| Participant I | Fourth Grade | Elementary |
| Participant J | Language Arts/Social Studies | Middle School |
| Participant K | Language Arts | Middle School |
| Participant L | Math | Middle School |
| Participant M | Self-Contained Special Education | High School |
| Participant N | Math | High School |
| Participant O | Social Studies | High School |

Table 4 Continued.

I obtained signed consent forms from fifteen novice teachers willing to participate in the study. Table 4 reflects the participants (assigned by letter) who provided written consent to participate, their subject area and what level they currently teach during the 2012-2013 school year.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the sample size was impacted based on an amendment that was made to a date within my Project Application for the Use of Human Subjects Research. A delayed response ultimately impacted my original pool of participants that had provided their written consent. This setback resulted in a reduction in my original pool of participants that had provided written consent. The study participation exclusion criterion stated that the participant could not have prepared for or participated in an ARD meeting in a teaching position in any public school district. Based on this criteria, I lost eight of my original participants (53%) because they had

been required to participate in at least one ARD occurring between the September 4, 2012 and October 22, 2012, timeframe. Therefore, Table 5 reflects the actual participants who took part in the first phase of my study. An asterisk indicates the participants that contributed to the second phase of the study. One of the original participants was unable to participate in the post-survey because he did not have an opportunity to be involved in an ARD meeting prior to the conclusion of my study.

| Name | Subject Area | Level Taught |
|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Participant A* | Speech Language Pathologist | Elementary |
| Participant B* | Fourth Grade | Elementary |
| Participant D* | Third Grade | Elementary |
| Participant F* | Kindergarten | Elementary |
| Participant G* | Resource Teacher | Elementary |
| Participant I* | Fourth Grade | Elementary |
| Participant O | Social Studies | High School |

Table 5 Participants that took the online Pre- and Post-Survey

A study consisting of a small sample size limits the opportunity to make comparisons between ethnicities, gender and background experiences; however, the information provides some depth to each participant.

Participant A

Participant A is a Caucasian female between the ages of 20-30 with her Masters. She works at the elementary level in a special education position.

Participant B

Participant B is a Caucasian female between the ages of 20-30 with her Bachelors. She works at the elementary level in a general education position.

Participant D

Participant B is a Caucasian female between the ages of 20-30 with her Bachelors. She works at the elementary level in a general education position.

Participant F

Participant F is a Caucasian female between the ages of 20-30 with her Bachelors. She works at the elementary level in a general education position.

Participant G

Participant G is a Caucasian female between the ages of 20-30 with her Bachelors. She works at the elementary level in a special education position.

Participant I

Participant I is a Caucasian female between the ages of 20-30 with her Bachelors. She works at the elementary level in a general education position.

Participant O

Participant O is a Caucasian male between the ages of 20-30 with his Masters. He works at the secondary level in a general education position.

Methods in Data Analysis

Due to the small sample size and minimal variation in participant profiles, the choices of data analysis were very limited but considered an inferential as well as descriptive statistics angle.

Based on a review of the criteria and purpose of various analysis choices, I chose to analyze my data using a phenomenological approach. Keeping in mind the guiding research questions and hypothesis of this study, I felt this approach would best meet the needs of this study.

Central Research Question

Which resource plays a stronger role in the preparation of novice teachers for their first ARD meeting, previous college preparation courses, involvement in a mentoring program, or a Mock ARD Training Video specific to the district's current expectations of an ARD meeting?

Hypothesis

My first hypothesis is that the novice special education teachers in this study will identify the mentoring program to have played a stronger role in their preparation for their first ARD meeting based on the special education teacher mentor's previous experience in preparing for and participating in an ARD meeting.

My second hypothesis is that the novice general education teachers in this study will identify the Mock ARD Training video to have played a stronger role in their preparation for their first ARD meeting.

Quantitative Methods for Data Analysis

In Gall's book entitled *Quantitative Research in Education* in Chapter 6, *Statistical Analysis of Research Data*, the first type of data analysis discussed involved the use of categorical scores. Categorical scores involve categories of variables that yield values that are discrete and nonordered when measured (2008, p. 148). From my survey, several variables could have been measured in this manner: a) gender (a natural dichotomous variable); b) race; c) age range; d) education level (bachelors or masters); e) current position held (general education or special education), and f) school level taught (elementary or secondary).

Using these categories, I had the opportunity to construct separate tables with the various categories and to assign each participant to a category keeping in mind that each category is discrete and that each participant can only be assigned to one category at a time. Based on the profiles of the participants that completed both pre- and post-surveys, the opportunity to use categorical scores was limited to education level and current position held. With my hypothesis in mind, I chose to reflect the outcomes of my research by comparing the responses of the general education teacher and the special education teacher.

Qualitative Methods for Data Analysis

The responses obtained from the interview protocol completed with the six novice teachers were audiotaped and transcribed. This information was then used to add more depth and breadth to the survey questions, as well as add any further clarification of answers if needed.

Also in Gall's book, he writes about frequency counts and percentages that can be used with variables within a study. In my interview protocol, there was an opportunity for interviewees to rank the overall influence that their pre-service experiences, their mentor teacher, and the mock ARD training video had on their preparation for their first ARD meeting and to what extent these three factors contributed to their overall success. These responses were analyzed using this method.

| Question | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| I have had previous experience with reading ARD paperwork. | | | | I, D, F | B |
| I have had previous coursework that prepared me for working with students with disabilities. | | I | D, F | B | |
| I have had previous instruction in talking with parents about their child's progress. | | I, F | B | D | |
| I have had previous coursework that prepared me for providing accommodations to students with disabilities. | | I | F | D, B | |
| I have had previous instruction in the ARD process. | | I | | D, F, B | |

Table 6 Module Responses on Pre-Survey: General Education Novice Teachers

Data Analysis Outcomes

Module

In this study, the researcher did not have any influence on the presence and/or the role of the college preparation course(s). As reflected in Tables 6, 7, 8 and 9, each of the six participants responded in the following manner to the questions involving the role of the college preparation coursework as it related to their preparation for their first ARD meeting.

| Question | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| I have had previous experience with reading ARD paperwork. | | G | | A | |
| I have had previous coursework that prepared me for working with students with disabilities. | G, A | | | | |
| I have had previous instruction in talking with parents about their child's progress. | G | | | A | |
| I have had previous coursework that prepared me for providing accommodations to students with disabilities. | G | A | | | |

Table 7 Module Responses on Pre-Survey: Special Education Novice Teachers

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| I have had previous instruction in the ARD process. | | G | | A | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|

Table 7 Continued.

| Question | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree or Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|------------|--|----------|-------------------|
| My previous coursework that addressed working with students with disabilities assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting. | | D, I | F | B | |
| My previous instruction in talking with parents about their child's progress assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting. | | B, D, F, I | | | |
| My previous coursework prepared me for providing accommodations to students with disabilities and assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting. | | F, I | D | B | |
| My previous instruction in the ARD process assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting. | | F, I | D | B | |
| My previous experience with reading ARD paperwork assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting. | | I | B, F, D | | |

Table 8 Module Responses on Post-Survey: General Education Novice Teachers

| Question | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| My previous experience with reading ARD paperwork assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting. | G | | A | | |
| My previous coursework that addressed working with students with disabilities assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting. | G | | A | | |
| My previous instruction in talking with parents about their child's progress assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting. | | G, A | | | |
| My previous coursework prepared me for providing accommodations to students with disabilities and assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting. | | G, A | | | |
| My previous instruction in the ARD process assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting. | G | | A | | |

Table 9 Module Responses on Post-Survey: Special Education Novice Teachers

The researcher ascertained through individual participant interviews that the module played various roles among the participants.

The general education teachers indicated the role of previous ARD experience through a module as having the smallest impact. Participant D stated, “I think I knew what it [the ARD process] was but not necessarily had an in depth, like knowledge, about it. I think I was just kind of introduced to what it was”. Participant B responded to the second interview question, “I’m trying to think. Probably but I don’t remember it”.

Participant A shared that she had done a practicum in her previous district so she had attended an ARD but “I had never experienced any of the paperwork”. When asked about previous coursework, she stated, “I took a public school methods course for graduate school but that was you know they talk about the terms IEP, FIE and ARD but it doesn’t really tell you how the actual process works”.

Participant G, on the other hand, share that she had many opportunities to sit in on ARD meetings during her student teaching. When asked if she had participated in any college course work on the ARD process, she responded, “Oh, yes!” She had, however not participated in any professional development workshops prior to her first year of teaching.

Mentor

My district currently uses the Mentoring in the 21st Century: Creating a Culture for Learning program with all teachers new to the district by way of its two year teacher induction program, BEAM (Beginning Educators and Mentors). The program provides monthly lessons and activities each organized into eight separate categories which capture the potential challenges and concerns of teachers new to the profession or to the district. Those categories include 1) Personal, 2) Professional, 3) Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, 4) Organizational Systems, 5) Students, 6) Colleagues, 7) School and School System, and 8) Parents and Community. There is also a supplementary section entitled Especially for Special Educators which offers additional recommended mentoring strategies to provide special educators the support they need to deal with unique issues in their area. The purpose of my internship this fall 2011 semester was to provide additional support, specifically in the area of special education, to teachers in their first year of teaching in the district. At the conclusion of my internship I had designed monthly special education teacher modules that were specific to the district and complimented the current Mentoring in the 21st Century program.

Due to my role in this study, I did not participate in the BEAM program for the fall 2012 class of novice teachers. As reflected in Tables 10, 11, 12 and 13, the six participants responded in the following manner to the questions involving the role of the district's mentor program as related to their preparation for their first ARD meeting.

| Question | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| My mentor will assist me in understanding the ARD paperwork. | G, A | | | | |
| My mentor will assist me in how to teach students with disabilities. | G | A | | | |
| My mentor will assist me in how to accommodate for students with disabilities as they relate to my classroom. | G | A | | | |
| My mentor will assist me in how to talk with parents of students with disabilities. | G | A | | | |
| My mentor will assist me in how to prepare for my first ARD meeting. | G, A | | | | |

Table 10 Mentor Responses on Pre-Survey: General Education Novice Teachers

| Question | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| My mentor will assist me in understanding the ARD paperwork. | I, F | D, B | | | |

Table 11 Mentor Responses on Pre-Survey: Special Education Novice Teachers

| | | | | | |
|---|---------|---------|--|--|--|
| My mentor will assist me in how to teach students with disabilities. | I, F | D, B | | | |
| My mentor will assist me in how to accommodate for students with disabilities as they relate to my classroom. | I, F, B | | | | |
| My mentor will assist me in how to talk with parents of students with disabilities. | I, F | D, B | | | |
| My mentor will assist me in how to prepare for my first ARD meeting. | F | I, D, B | | | |

Table 11 Continued.

| Question | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| My mentor assisted me in understanding the ARD paperwork. | | I | B, F, D | | |

Table 12 Mentor Responses on Post-Survey: General Education Novice Teachers

| | | | | | |
|--|--|------------|------|--|--|
| My mentor assisted me in how to teach students with disabilities. | | B, I | F, D | | |
| My mentor assisted me in how to accommodate for students with disabilities. | | B, I | D | | |
| My mentor assisted me in how to talk with parents of students with disabilities. | | B, F, D, I | | | |
| My mentor assisted me in how to prepare for my first ARD meeting. | | B, F, I | D | | |

Table 12 Continued.

| Question | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| My mentor assisted me in understanding the ARD paperwork. | G, A | | | | |
| My mentor assisted me in how to teach students with disabilities. | G | A | | | |
| My mentor assisted me in how to accommodate for students with disabilities. | G | A | | | |

Table 13 Mentor Responses on Post-Survey: Special Education Novice Teachers

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| My mentor assisted me in how to talk with parents of students with disabilities. | G | A | | | |
| My mentor assisted me in how to prepare for my first ARD meeting. | | G | A | | |

Table 13 Continued.

The researcher determined through individual participant interviews that the mentor's role varied among the participants. When each participant was asked to list what concerns or needs specific to special education that had not been met through the mentoring process, the responses were greater from the general education teachers than from the special education teachers.

Participant D and B reported a desire to know more about how to document and keep records of student work and accommodations. Participant B shared specifically, "I felt unprepared when I was directly called out on something [in the ARD] and I did not have that information with me".

Participant D reported that she wished her mentor had addressed how to incorporate accommodations into the classroom more, but more so that she had talked with her about holding parent conferences with parents of students with disabilities. "I have [held parent conferences with parents of students with disabilities] but probably not as much as I should have up until now, I guess to fully help the student and make sure the parents and I are on the same page".

Multimedia

The third factor involved in this study is an ARD training video I created specifically for this study. The video follows an eighteen page script creating a typical Annual ARD meeting involving a campus administrator, an educational diagnostician, a special education teacher, a general education teacher and a parent. For the purpose of this study, a typical Annual ARD is defined as one that reviews the student's eligibility, current levels of academic and functional performance, proposed new goals, classroom accommodations, schedule of services, district and state testing decisions and if there is a justification for extended school year services. The ARD Agenda implemented by all campuses across the district was followed to further provide an example of the expectations of all members at an ARD meeting in the district.

Tables 14, 15, 16 and 17 reflect the six participants responses to the questions involving the role of the district's Mock ARD Training Video as it related to their preparation for their first ARD meeting.

| Question | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| I need to understand how to read ARD paperwork. | D, F, B | I | | | |

Table 14 Multimedia Responses on Pre-Survey: General Education Novice Teachers

| | | | | | |
|--|---------|---------|--|--|--|
| I need to be knowledgeable about how to teach students with disabilities; I need to understand about the thirteen recognized disabilities. | D, F, B | I | | | |
| I need to understand my role in talking with parents about their child's progress. | F | I, D, B | | | |
| I need to understand how to accommodate for students with disabilities. | D, F | I, B | | | |
| I need to understand my role in the ARD meeting. | D, F | I, B | | | |

Table 14 Continued.

| Question | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| I need to understand how to read ARD paperwork. | | G, A | | | |
| I need to be knowledgeable about how to teach students with disabilities; I need to understand about the thirteen recognized disabilities. | A | G | | | |

Table 15 Multimedia Responses on Pre-Survey: Special Education Novice Teachers

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| I need to understand my role in talking with parents about their child's progress. | A | G | | | |
| I need to understand how to accommodate for students with disabilities. | A | G | | | |
| I need to understand my role in the ARD meeting. | A | G | | | |

Table 15 Continued.

| Question | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|------------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| I understand how to read ARD paperwork as it relates to my classroom. | | F, D, I | B | | |
| I am more knowledgeable about how to teach students with disabilities; I understand more about the thirteen recognized disabilities. | | I | B, D | F | |
| I understand my role in talking with parents about their child's progress. | | B, F, D, I | | | |
| I understand how to accommodate for students with disabilities. | | B, F, I | D | | |
| I understand my role in the ARD meeting. | F, I | B, D | | | |

Table 16 Multimedia Responses on Post Survey: General Education Novice Teachers

| Question | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| I understand how to read ARD paperwork as it relates to my classroom. | G | A | | | |
| I am more knowledgeable about how to teach students with disabilities; I understand more about the thirteen recognized disabilities. | G | A | | | |
| I understand my role in talking with parents about their child's progress. | G | A | | | |
| I understand how to accommodate for students with disabilities. | G | A | | | |
| I understand my role in the ARD meeting. | G,A | | | | |

Table 17 Multimedia Responses on Post-Survey: Special Education Novice Teachers

The researcher learned through individual participant interviews that the module provided different levels of support among the participants.

Participant D rated the Mock ARD Training video as the primary support that played a role in her understanding of the ARD process. When asked what types of topics her mentor discussed with her regarding special education prior to the first ARD meeting, she shared that her mentor asked if she had any questions “like do you have anything you need to know before [the ARD meeting] after you watched the video?” Participant D went on to say that “the video I watched pretty much explained it”.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the results of the mixed-method analysis of the data. A thorough analysis of data from the Pre-ARD Survey, the Post-ARD Survey, and the individual participant interviews was used to answer the research question: Which resource plays a stronger role in the preparation of novice teachers for their first ARD meeting, previous college preparation courses, involvement in a mentoring program, or a Mock ARD Training Video specific to the district's current expectations of an ARD meeting? The data collection revealed a distinct difference between the role of the mentor and the multimedia resource between novice general education and special education teachers.

Overview and Analysis of Key Findings

Module

Novice general education teachers. Of the four novice general education teacher participants, none indicated having any experience reading ARD paperwork. Only one indicated having any previous coursework in the area of working with students with disabilities, experience in providing accommodations to students with disabilities or with the ARD process. Two participants had previous experience in talking with parents of students with disabilities. During individual interviews, participants either stated they had not been provided prior experience in the ARD process or thought they had but

could not remember what they had been taught which demonstrated a lack of solid foundation in this area as they enter their first ARD meeting.

In a Post ARD survey, novice general education teacher participants, with the exception of Participant B, noted the importance of the role that any previous coursework or exposure to the ARD process would have benefitted them in the preparation for their first ARD meeting.

This information signifies an even greater need to support novice general education teacher participants in their multifaceted role as a teacher of a special education student.

Novice special education teachers. Of the two special education teachers, one indicated having experience with reading ARD paperwork; the other had attended ARD meetings but was not familiar with the paperwork. Both participants had completed previous coursework that prepared them for working with students with disabilities and implementing accommodations. Participant G had previous experience in talking with parents about their student with disabilities and had previous instruction in the ARD process. She shared in her interview, “In the district I was in before we kind of took over everything. It was important for me to kind of know how we did it [her role] in this district”. Participant A had taken a public school methods course but shared that “it doesn’t really tell you how the actual process works”. Post ARD Survey outcomes were similar to that of the novice general education teachers.

This information demonstrated a stronger foundation for the novice special education teacher to enter the ARD meeting from but that there is still a need to fill in the identified gaps.

Mentor

Novice general education teachers. A comparison of Pre ARD Survey and Post ARD Survey responses was quite revealing of the impact the role of the general education mentor had on the novice general education teacher. Of the four novice general education teacher participants, all indicated a preconceived assumption that their mentor would assist them in understanding the ARD paperwork, how to teach and accommodate for students with disabilities, how to talk with parents of students with disabilities and how to prepare for their first ARD meeting. A breakout of each question asked and the participant's change in answer is reflected in Table 18 below. The information in italics is from the Post ARD Survey. The responses reveal the change in this assumption from the start of the year when they completed the Pre ARD Survey until the point in time when they took the Post ARD Survey.

| Question | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------------------------|
| My mentor will assist me in understanding the ARD paperwork. | I, F | D, B | |

Table 18 Comparison of Pre-ARD Survey and Post-ARD Survey responses from General Education Novice Teachers and the role of the Mentor

| | | | |
|---|---------|------------|---------|
| My mentor assisted me in understanding the ARD paperwork. | | I | B, F, D |
| My mentor will assist me in how to teach students with disabilities | I, F | D, B | |
| My mentor assisted me in how to teach students with disabilities. | | B, I | F, D |
| My mentor will assist me in how to accommodate for students with disabilities as they relate to my classroom. | I, F, B | | |
| My mentor assisted me in how to accommodate for students with disabilities. | | B, I | D |
| My mentor will assist me in how to talk with parents of students with disabilities. | I, F | D, B | |
| My mentor assisted me in how to talk with parents of students with disabilities. | | B, F, D, I | |
| My mentor will assist me in how to prepare for my first ARD meeting. | F | I, D, B | |
| My mentor assisted me in how to prepare for my first ARD meeting. | | B, F, I | D |

Table 18 Continued.

This information suggests that the role of the mentor in the current District's induction program may not be fulfilling the needs of the novice teacher in the area of special education preparation for ARD meetings and working with students with disabilities in their general education classrooms.

Novice special education teachers. In contrast, the responses from the novice special education teachers with regards to their expectations of their mentor were met in the Post ARD Survey responses. There was only difference in response from Participant A when asked if she felt her mentor would assist her in how to prepare for her first ARD meeting. She initially indicated that she strongly agreed that her mentor would assist her and later indicated her response to only agree. In reviewing Participant A's interview response for further clarification of this answer, the researcher felt this response may best capture the novice special education teacher's outlook after her first ARD meeting.

Well, not that they [concerns or needs specific to special education] weren't met. It's just that each case is so different that there were always a lot of questions. You know just little things that aren't the same for every kid. I still call Becky all the time for questions.

Both Participants' initial reaction when asked what concerns or needs specific to special education were met through the mentoring process responded quickly with "Everything!" and then continued with examples specific to their experience.

The role of the special education mentor appears to play a much larger role in the preparation of the novice special education teacher for the first ARD meeting as well as working with teachers and parents of students with special needs.

Multimedia

Novice general education teachers. With respect to the information provided in the current Mock ARD Training Video, only one survey question truly assesses the role of the video as it is used in isolation at this time. That question involves the novice general education teacher's understanding of their role in the ARD meeting. A comparison of Pre ARD Survey and Post ARD Survey indicates a somewhat stagnant

response outcome. Participant D changed her answer from strongly agree to agree and Participant I changed her response from agree to strongly agree. The other two participants did not alter their response.

Novice special education teachers. The two special education teachers responded to their knowledge of their role in the ARD process after viewing the video as strongly agree. This was a change from Participant G's original response of agree prior to viewing the Mock ARD Training video.

Findings in Light of the Research Question

Research Question

Which resource plays a stronger role in the preparation of novice teachers for their first ARD meeting, previous college preparation courses, involvement in a mentoring program, or a Mock ARD Training Video specific to the district's current expectations of an ARD meeting?

While the responses to the surveys do not appear to indicate that the video had a strong impact on the novice general education teachers but had a large impact on the novice special education teachers, at the end of each interview, participants were asked to rank the usefulness of each support, the module, the mentor or the multimedia, played in their preparation for their first ARD meeting. Three out of the four novice general education teacher participants listed the Mock ARD Training video as their strongest support. This differed from the novice special education teachers' responses which listed the mentor as the greater resource.

In summary, the findings in this single data analysis supports the researcher's first initial hypothesis which was that the novice special education teachers in this study would identify the mentoring program to have played a stronger role in their preparation for their first ARD meeting based on the special education teacher mentor's previous experience in preparing for and participating in an ARD meeting. In addition the findings in this single data analysis also support the researcher's second initial hypothesis which was that the novice general education teachers in this study would identify the Mock ARD Training video to have played a stronger role in their preparation for their first ARD meeting.

Implications and Recommendations for Current Practice

Based upon the findings in this research study, additional support is needed for novice general education teachers to prepare for their first ARD meeting.

Module

The role of the university module and previous ARD experience is out of the control of the district; therefore, the data collection from this portion of the study serves to provide background to each participant but cannot be considered in the implication section of this study.

Mentor

The role of the mentor plays a greater role in this study as evidenced by the outcomes indicated in the Pre ARD Survey, Post ARD Survey and interviews.

Both novice general education and special education teacher participants indicated a response of either strongly agree or agree in their expectation of the role their

mentor would play in their preparation for their first ARD meeting as well as other responsibilities involved in working with students with special needs.

In individual interviews, novice general education teachers shared the importance of their mentor's role in talking with them about what to expect in an ARD and what their role would be in the ARD. Additional support was requested in the areas of documentation, incorporating accommodations into their lessons, how to modify instruction and conducting effective parent conferences. Novice special education teacher participants indicated a need for the same areas of support noted by the novice general education teacher participants in addition to classroom management support but indicated these needs were being met by their mentor. The difference in responses in this area then is not that the needs are different but that they are being met by the mentor of the novice special education teacher but not by the mentor of the novice general education teacher.

Multimedia

The Mock ARD Training video, as it was created for this study, served to provide a demonstration of how the ARD Agenda is followed in a typical ARD meeting. The questions asked in this survey span a much broader range than were supported in the video. Based on the participants' responses to the last question involving their understanding of their role in the ARD process, it does not appear that the video had a strong impact on their increased knowledge of the ARD process. Perhaps providing a discussion session after or within the viewing session of the video may be helpful. It is important to also note that the training video was provided to each participant individually and not viewed in a large group setting. A change to a more controlled setting may also increase the researcher's control of the dissemination of information.

Another implication identified as a result of the final section of the survey involving the multimedia, is the other areas of support needed by novice general education teacher participants. Additional training videos or modules could be created to support the following areas: reading ARD paperwork, an understanding of the thirteen recognized eligibilities, and how to further accommodate for students with disabilities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were made to the district to address the identified areas of continued need as they apply to the ARD meeting process.

The first recommendation was to provide a venue where all campus personnel working in an administrative role or classroom role could view the Mock ARD Training Video at the beginning of the school year. Participants would include employees new to teaching as well as seasoned teachers. Within this venue, a representative from the district's special education services department would introduce the video as well as facilitate a follow up discussion after the viewing to address questions or example scenarios. This training may take place at the campus level and therefore schedules would need to be coordinated between facilitators and campus administrators.

The second recommendation to the district would be to provide more training within the Beginning Educators and Mentors Induction Program (BEAM) in specific areas reflected as needs in the Post ARD Survey. One of the first areas of identified need involved understanding how to document progress in the classroom. Direct instruction, modeling and resources should be provided to the novice teachers in the BEAM program by licensed special education staff. Another area of identified need was how to modify instruction and/or accommodate for students with disabilities. Again, providing examples, resources and opportunities to visit classrooms where appropriate instruction and accommodations are being implemented would address this need. Similar to this, was a need to apply appropriate classroom management strategies in the general education and special education classrooms. Role playing scenarios as well as providing opportunities to observe in classrooms where effective classroom management strategies are implemented would provide the support needed in this area. Novice teachers shared a need for further support on how to talk with parents of students with

disabilities. Setting up mock scenarios and role playing within the safety of the BEAM meeting setting would help to improve novice teacher's skills in this area. How to prepare for the first ARD meeting was the final identified area of additional need. Written checklists and templates to accompany the current Mock ARD Training Video would assist the novice teacher on making connections with the information being reviewed and discussed in the ARD meeting. This training can also be facilitated by district special education staff.

A concluding recommendation would be to create additional Mock ARD Training videos where more specific scenarios are played out. Examples of this might include: How to prepare for your first Manifestation Determination ARD meeting or How to prepare for a Transition ARD meeting. These videos would be much shorter and specific to the topic being discussed. Any teacher could access these more topic-specific videos through the district's website as an impending ARD approached. This would further serve to prepare all ARD members for the ARD meeting and result in a more fluid process.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further research in this area could be approached from a variety of angles. The first would be to incorporate a larger sample size. A control group and a treatment group may provide the researcher more opportunity for data analysis and aid in determining if any other factors may be lending support to the novice teacher's steps in preparation for the first ARD meeting.

Clarifying the impact of the participant's exposure to any ARD training or experience prior to entering the classroom should be addressed by being more explicit in the wording of the survey questions. A post-survey involving the role of the module resulted in some confusion in the data results. Future researchers may choose to reword the survey questions or take them out of the post survey portion of the study. Information gathered from the pre-survey on the impact of previous experiences prior to becoming a novice teacher could be used as qualitative data or analyzed in a different way.

Future researchers may also choose to gather more studies on the role technology currently plays in the ARD meeting process. Researchers may question the impact of the reduction in paper by use of computer software systems on novice teacher's levels of stress or desire to leave the field of education based on this task.

Also in the area of technology, novice teachers' access to training videos and online supports in the area of ARD preparation may be an area of interest. While this information was not available at the time of this study, it is quite possible that future researchers will have more access to this as Regional Service Centers and rural districts are employing this technique of training more often due to budget cuts and fewer personnel available to train the educators on this process.

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APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Preparing the Novice Teacher for the First ARD Meeting

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by April Dyke, a researcher from Texas A&M University. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to identify factors that play a role in decreasing anxiety as it relates to ARD meetings and the degree of importance each factor plays to assist the district in providing the supports needed for novice teachers to ensure their retention.

Why Am I Being Asked To Be In This Study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are a novice certified teacher employed as a classroom teacher at the elementary level or as a teacher in a core academic area at the secondary level that may participate in an ARD meeting in the fall 2012.

How Many People Will Be Asked To Be In This Study?

Up to fifty people (participants) will be invited to participate in this study locally based on the novice teacher recruitment during the 2012-2013 school year.

What Are the Alternatives to being in this study?

The alternative to being in the study is not to participate.

What Will I Be Asked To Do In This Study?

You will be asked to complete a seventeen question online pre-survey prior to the start of school and a twenty-five question online post-survey after the completion of your attendance in your first ARD meeting. You will also be provided the opportunity to participate in an optional individual interview or focus group interview. Should you choose to only participate in the survey portion of this study, your participation will last no longer than the fall 2012 semester in two separate sessions lasting no more than fifteen minutes in the privacy of your own office/home. Should you also choose to participate in an individual interview or focus group session, an additional half hour to

hour of your time would be required for one face-to-face session during the fall 2012 semester.

First Contact (August 6-10, 2012)

All novice teachers hired by the district will be contacted via district email or US mail to introduce the researcher, the purpose of the Research Study and to request their participation in the study.

Second Contact (August 14, 2012)

This visit will last about ten minutes. During this visit the researcher will speak with the 2012-2013 novice teachers hired by the district during a New Teacher luncheon organized by the Beginning Educator and Mentor program supervisor. This will serve as a follow up to the correspondence sent out during the week of August 6-10, 2012, and address any questions the possible participants may have about the study. The researcher will obtain signed consent forms from the novice teachers willing to participate in the study through August 31, 2012.

Third Contact (September 4th-14th, 2012)

Participants will have an opportunity to complete the online pre-survey during this time period. This time period is specified because it is assumed that novice teachers will not have been involved in an ARD meeting or viewed the Mock ARD Training Video during that time.

Fourth Contact (September 17th-November 16, 2012)

Participants will have an opportunity to complete the online post-survey during this time period. This time period is specified because it allows opportunity for the participants to be involved in an ARD meeting as well as have had the opportunity to view the Mock ARD Training Video.

Fifth Contact-Optional (November 26-December 20, 2012)

This timeframe will allow individual interviews and focus group interviews to be scheduled and conducted. Each participant will only be expected to meet for one thirty-sixty minute session. The number of interviews will be determined based on participant responses.

Sixth Contact (Spring 2013)

All participants will be provided a brief written summary of the findings and recommendations from this study via an attachment sent electronically.

You may be removed from the study by the investigator for these reasons:

- If you are unable to participate in an ARD meeting prior to November 16, 2012

Will Photos, Video or Audio Recordings Be Made Of Me during the Study?

The researcher will make an audio recording during the study to assist in the reduction of note taking and increasing the facilitation of the interviews only if you give your permission to do so. Indicate your decision below by initialing in the space provided.

_____ I give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

_____ I do not give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

Are There Any Risks To Me?

Although the researcher has tried to avoid risks, you may feel that some questions/procedures that are asked of you will be stressful or upsetting. You do not have to answer anything you do not want to.

Will There Be Any Costs To Me?

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

If you suffer any injury as a result of taking part in this research study, please understand that nothing has been arranged to provide free treatment of the injury or any other type of payment. However, all needed facilities, emergency treatment and professional services will be available to you, just as they are to the community in general. You should report any injury to <insert PI name and phone number>. You will not give up any of your legal rights by signing this consent form.

Will I Be Paid To Be In This Study?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

Will Information From This Study Be Kept Private?

The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

Information about you will be stored in computer files protected with a password. This consent form will be filed securely in an official area.

People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Information about you and related to this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law.

Who may I Contact for More Information?

You may contact the Principal Investigator, Larry Kelly, Ph.D., to tell him about a concern or complaint about this research at (979) 458-3515 or lkelly@tamu.edu . You may also contact the Protocol Director, April Dyke, M.Ed. at (214)-496-6867 or adyke@coppellisd.com . You may also contact the Graduate Committee Co-Chair, Mario Torres at (979) 458-3016 or mstorres@tamu.edu .

For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office at (979) 458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

What if I Change My Mind About Participating?

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide to not begin or to stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no effect on your employment or relationship with Coppell Independent School District. Any new information discovered about the research will be provided to you. This information could affect your willingness to continue your participation.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. The procedures, risks, and benefits have been explained to me, and my questions have been answered. I know that new information about this research study will be provided to me as it becomes available and that the researcher will tell me if I must be removed from the study. I can ask more questions if I want, and I can still receive novice teacher supports if I stop participating in this study. A copy of this entire consent form will be given to me.

Participant's Signature

Date

Printed Name

Date

INVESTIGATOR'S AFFIDAVIT:

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

Signature of Presenter Date

Printed Name Date

APPENDIX B

FIRST CONTACT

Welcome to the district! I am so excited to have you join us this 2012-2013 school year!

My name is April Dyke and I am the Lead Educational Diagnostician for the district. I had the honor of working with the Beginning Educators and Mentors program last year for my internship by serving as a resource in the area of special education.

I chose to work with the BEAM program because I have had a personal interest in the identification of factors that play a role in the novice teacher's decision to remain in the field of education since I was in the classroom from 1996-1999. There have been many studies on the impact a mentor can make in the first year of a teacher's career. A 2011 report by the National Institute for Education Statistics reported that among beginning public school teachers who were assigned a mentor in 2007–08, about 8 percent were not teaching in 2008-2009 and 10 percent were not teaching in 2009-2010. In contrast, among the beginning public school teachers who were not assigned a mentor in 2007-2008, about 16 percent were not teaching in 2008-2009 and 23 percent were not teaching in 2009-2010 (p. 3). Effective district mentoring programs have achieved up to an 80% success rate in the retention of new teachers in their first five years in the classroom (Butler, 2008).

This research is undertaken for completion of my doctorate at Texas A&M University. You are being asked to participate in the survey because you have been identified as a first year teacher. Your thoughts on the identification of factors that play a role in decreasing anxiety as it relates to ARD meetings and the degree of importance each factor plays will assist the district in providing the supports needed for novice teachers to ensure their retention in the field of education.

I have attached a copy of the consent form to participate in my research to help explain what your role would involve.

Should you be interested in participating in this research or have any questions, I will be available to answer your questions at the BEAM luncheon, scheduled for August 14, 2012, at 11:00. At that time, I will also have a consent form for you to sign indicating your understanding of your role in the research.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in this research and may withdraw anytime without consequence. All responses are confidential using a personal identification number system and your identity will not be revealed in the final manuscript.

I am excited about the opportunity to work with you this 2012-2013 school year and would appreciate your consideration to participate in this research.

APPENDIX C

SECOND CONTACT POWERPOINT



April Dyke, M.Ed.

Texas A&M University
Doctoral Candidate 2012

❖ Novice teachers currently enrolled in their first year of the Beginning Educator and Mentor (BEAM) program in Coppell Independent School District

❖ Identification of factors that play a role in decreasing anxiety as it relates to ARD meetings

❖ Provide the supports needed for novice teachers to ensure their retention in the field of education.

Focus of Study

- September 4th-14th, 2012
 - Complete the online seventeen question pre-survey during this time period.
- September 17th-November 16th, 2012
 - View Training Video prior to first ARD meeting.
 - Complete the online twenty question post-survey during this time period after participation in first ARD meeting.
- November 26-December 20, 2012
 - Optional individual interviews to be scheduled and conducted. Each participant will only be expected to meet for one thirty-sixty minute session.

What is Involved?

- Consent forms can be completed today or
- Sent via Interoffice Mail to April Dyke c/o Brock Center by August 31, 2012

Questions?

APPENDIX D

THE NOVICE TEACHER & THE FIRST ARD MEETING:PRE-SURVEY

Qualtrics Survey Software

Page 1 of 6

Please complete the following profile questions.

Please provide your first and last name.
No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.
Information about you will be stored in computer files protected with a password.

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
☐ Female

What is your race?

- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
☐ African American
☐ Hispanic
☐ White
☐ Other

At which age did you enter the teaching profession?

- ☐ 20-30
☐ 31-40
☐ 41-50
☐ 50+

What is your highest degree earned?

- ☐ Bachelors
☐ Masters
☐ Doctorate
☐ Alternative Certification

At what school level do you teach?

- ☐ Elementary
- ☐ Middle School
- ☐ High School
- ☐ Other

What is your current position?

- ☐ Regular Education
- ☐ Special Education

For each item, please check the appropriate response that indicates the item's level of importance to you as it relates to your preparation for your first ARD meeting.

My mentor will assist me in understanding the ARD paperwork.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

My mentor will assist me in how to teach students with disabilities.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

My mentor will assist me in how to accommodate for students with disabilities as they relate to my classroom.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree

- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
☐ » Disagree
☐ » Strongly Disagree

My mentor will assist me in how to talk with parents of students with disabilities.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
☐ » Agree
☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
☐ » Disagree
☐ » Strongly Disagree

My mentor will assist me in how to prepare for my first ARD meeting.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
☐ » Agree
☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
☐ » Disagree
☐ » Strongly Disagree

I need to understand how to read ARD paperwork.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
☐ » Agree
☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
☐ » Disagree
☐ » Strongly Disagree

I need to be knowledgeable about how to teach students with disabilities; I need to understand about the twelve recognized disabilities in Texas.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
☐ » Agree
☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
☐ » Disagree
☐ » Strongly Disagree

I need to understand my role in talking with parents about their child's progress.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

I need to understand how to accommodate for students with disabilities.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

I need to understand my role in the ARD meeting.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

I have had previous experience with reading ARD paperwork.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

I have had previous coursework that prepared me for working with students with disabilities.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree

- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

I have had previous instruction in talking with parents about their child's progress.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

I have had previous coursework that prepared me for providing accommodations to students with disabilities.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

I have had previous instruction in the ARD process.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

Other Participation Opportunities

Would you like to participate in an individual interview with the researcher?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

| |
|---|
| Would you like to participate in a focus group interview? |
| <input type="radio"/> Yes |
| <input type="radio"/> No |
| Thank you for completing the Pre-Survey. Once your responses are obtained, the ARD Training Video will be provided to you for viewing. |
| |

APPENDIX E

THE NOVICE TEACHER AND THE FIRST ARD MEETING: POST-SURVEY

Qualtrics Survey Software

Page 1 of 6

Default Question Block

Please complete the following profile questions.

Please provide your first and last name.
No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.
Information about you will be stored in computer files protected with a password.

For each item, please check the appropriate response that indicates the item's level of importance to you as it relates to your preparation for your first ARD meeting.

My mentor assisted me in understanding the ARD paperwork.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

My mentor assisted me in how to teach students with disabilities.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

My mentor assisted me in how to accommodate for students with disabilities as they relate to my classroom.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree

- ☐ » Disagree
☐ » Strongly Disagree

My mentor assisted me in how to talk with parents of students with disabilities.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
☐ » Agree
☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
☐ » Disagree
☐ » Strongly Disagree

My mentor assisted me in how to prepare for my first ARD meeting.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
☐ » Agree
☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
☐ » Disagree
☐ » Strongly Disagree

I understand how to read ARD paperwork as it relates to my classroom.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
☐ » Agree
☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
☐ » Disagree
☐ » Strongly Disagree

I am more knowledgeable about how to teach students with disabilities; I understand more about the twelve recognized disabilities in Texas.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
☐ » Agree
☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
☐ » Disagree
☐ » Strongly Disagree

I understand my role in talking with parents about their child's progress.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

I understand how to accommodate for students with disabilities.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

I understand my role in the ARD meeting.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

My previous experience with reading ARD paperwork assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

My previous coursework that addressed working with students with disabilities assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐

- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

My previous instruction in talking with parents about their child's progress assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

My previous coursework prepared me for providing accommodations to students with disabilities and assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

My previous instruction in the ARD process assisted me with my first actual ARD meeting.

- ☐ » Strongly Agree
- ☐ » Agree
- ☐ » Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ » Disagree
- ☐ » Strongly Disagree

Additional Questions

What levels of disability(ies) did the student in your ARD possess? Please describe.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Was this an Annual, Review, Transfer, Transition, or Failure ARD? Please describe.

| |
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| |
|--|

What types of supports did the student in question receive? Please describe.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Was the student being successful in their current program at the time of the ARD meeting? Please describe.

| |
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In what capacity do you work with the student being discussed in the ARD?

| |
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| |
|--|

Thank you for completing the post survey. If you indicated your desire to participate in an interview or focus group, you will be contacted with a meeting date.

APPENDIX F

MOCK ARD TRAINING SCRIPT ARD AGENDA

A=Administrator GE= Gen Ed Teacher SE=Sped Teacher
D=Diagnostician P=Parent

(A) Let's begin our meeting with Introductions so that everyone is familiar with who is around the table.

(Everyone will introduce themselves by name and position):

Brad Hunt, Administrator; April Dyke, Diagnostician; Montie Parker, Special Education Teacher; Cooper Hilton, General Education Teacher; Michelle King, Ryan's mother

(A) Prior to beginning the meeting I would like to first read the Statement of Confidentiality so that everyone is aware of the expectations for the ARD meeting.

The information discussed in this ARD Committee meeting is considered confidential information under FERPA. The release of personally identifiable information of a student receiving special education services to any person who does not have a need to know constitutes a violation of federal law. Personally identifiable includes any information which would make a student's identity traceable. In the district, strict adherence to student and family rights to confidentiality is followed. Please confine all discussion to information pertaining only to the intended student during this ARD meeting.

Are there any questions?

(All) (Nod NO)

(A) Good, then let's begin by defining the Purpose of Today's Meeting. We are here today for Ryan's Annual ARD. It has been almost a full year since we last met as a committee to review Ryan's educational program.

(A) Mrs. Dyke, can you review for us Ryan's current eligibility for special education services?

(D) Of course. Ryan currently qualifies for special education based on his eligibility of a Specific Learning Disability. Ryan's Cognitive Processing Deficit was in the area of Short Term Memory. Based on Ryan's formal achievement scores, this cognitive area of weakness is having a direct impact on Ryan's identified areas of achievement deficits in Basic Reading, Reading Comprehension and Math Reasoning.

Ryan 's first Full Initial Individual Evaluation was completed last fall on November 14, 2010, so his eligibility is current at this time. Ryan's next Full Individual Evaluation will be due in three years on or before November 14, 2013. The committee will address the need for updated formal and informal reevaluation at a later date.

The information yielded in Ryan's current Full Individual Evaluation is used to help guide this committee in making decisions for Ryan's program based on his identified areas of strengths and weaknesses.

In addition to these formal evaluation results, we will also review Ryan's Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance, which are based on any current state, district and classroom assessments that have taken place since Ryan's last ARD. All of this information, in addition to Ryan's progress on his IEP goals, is needed to support any decisions made in today's meeting.

(A) Are there any questions about Ryan's eligibility or evaluation?

(All) (Nod NO)

(A) Mrs. King, let's begin with you. Do you have any celebrations or concerns to share with us today regarding your son, Ryan? How is the fourth grade going for Ryan this year?

(P) Well, Ryan seems to really like fourth grade this year. We are very pleased with the communication we receive from the teachers. Mr. Hilton, your weekly newsletter is very helpful to us as well as your website. And Mr. Parker, thank you for being so available to me through email when I have concerns or questions.

This is the first year that Ryan has received actual grades so I admit I was a bit surprised when he received a C on his last report card. He received A's and B's on his first report card but I understand much of that first 9 weeks is review from third grade. I admit I am a bit concerned about his grades and wonder if his current program is enough to meet his needs. He is getting very frustrated at home with homework assignments and I'm not always sure how to help him. He can't seem to explain what he needs help with and I don't want him to start getting frustrated with school and shut down.

His father and I are also very unsure of this new state assessment and if Ryan will be able to pass it with his learning problems.

(A) You have shared some very valid concerns and we will address each of those in today's meeting. Let's begin by reviewing how Ryan is currently performing. Mr. Hilton will you share with us how Ryan is performing in your class as compared to his fourth grade peers?

(GE) Of course. To begin, Ryan is a great kid to have in class. He is a real leader and never afraid to join into the discussions in the classroom. It is evident that you and your husband have provided Ryan with some great opportunities for learning outside of the classroom. He is able to make a lot of personal connections with much of what we discuss in class. You mentioned that Ryan is not always able to explain the assignments to you. I can see that in class as well. Ryan does not always ask questions when he should. I have found that when I ask him if he understands the task assigned, he always says yes but then when I ask him to explain to me what it is he should be doing, he is not always able to tell me exactly. I think some of his homework grades may have played into his report card this last nine weeks. We can talk about his current accommodations and what seems to be working as well as what new areas of need may need to be addressed later in the meeting.

(A) You mentioned some concerns with Ryan understanding the assignment. Mrs. Dyke, is there anything in his evaluation that would reflect a weakness with Ryan's receptive or expressive language skills?

(D) In reviewing Ryan's formal evaluation from last year, his scores do not reflect a weakness in those areas but do reflect a weakness in Ryan's short term memory. He may be having difficulty taking in the information in an organized way which impacts his ability to retrieve the information when called upon to do so. Mrs. King, this may be why he is unable to tell you what his assignments are or what he is supposed to do be doing on them. Does Ryan use any kind of assignment agenda or checklists at this time? We may want to consider that when we get to that part of the discussion.

(A) OK, let's be sure to revisit that when that time comes. Mr. Cooper, what about his academic performance in the general education classroom?

(GE) To answer how Ryan is performing compared to other fourth grade students, let's look at his assessments. Last spring Ryan took the TAKS Modified in Reading and the TAKS Accommodated in Math. He passed both of these tests last year. This was great since that was his first year to take a state assessment. Of course this year, we have a different state assessment, the STAAR, but Mrs. Dyke will share what criterion is involved in determining which test will be most appropriate for Ryan after we review Ryan's current levels of performance and what areas Ryan still continues to need support.

As far as district assessments, I was very pleased with Ryan's growth in Reading this year. On the Universal screener maze at the Beginning of the Year in 4th grade, Ryan scored only a 4; 12 was the minimum to be considered not at risk. His fluency on a fourth grade level passage was 4 words correct in one minute. The benchmark for fourth grade is 90 words correct per minute. His Developmental Reading Assessment was a level 10. At the end of third grade he was at a level 8 so there was not only maintenance of skills but some growth over the summer. Ryan is still reading below

grade level when we compare him to his fourth grade peers. The benchmark for fourth grade is a level 38 but when we look at Ryan's personal progress, I am still pleased at how far he has come.

In Math, Ryan has made significant growth. On the Performance Series in Math, if you'll look at this report, you'll see Ryan's score was 2272 at the end of last year in May which fell in the Below Average range and then 2363 as of January of this school year which puts him in the Low Average range.

With the appropriate accommodations, Ryan is really showing great growth in this area. I am very proud of him and I think he is proud of himself as well.

(A) Mrs. King, do you have any questions for Mr. Hilton about how Ryan is performing in his class?

(P) I'm really pleased to see the scores you've shown me. I, too, think he is feeling more confident in math. It's just his reading is still such a struggle and that makes it hard for him when he is doing the word problems.

How much is he out of your classroom this year?

(GE) Well, based on his schedule of services that was agreed upon at his last ARD, he is in my classroom for all of science and social studies. He attends all of special areas, such as art, music, and PE, with our class and of course lunch and recess. Currently he is receiving his direct instruction in Mr. Parker's room for reading and math but Mr. Parker and I have been talking quite a bit about Ryan's progress on his current IEPs in math. Mr. Parker has begun to hit on skills that we are targeting right now at the fourth grade level and I would like the committee to consider the possibility of Ryan spending more time in my classroom for math when the time comes to discuss schedule of services.

(A) Thank you Mr. Hilton for all of your information. I am anxious to hear about Ryan's progress on his current IEPs. Mrs. King, do you have any further questions for Mr. Hilton at this time?

(P) No I don't think so. Not right now anyway.

(A) Mr. Parker, would you talk about how Ryan is doing in your classroom and his progress on his current IEPs?

(SE) Sure. Ryan is a very hard worker in my classroom. In reading, as Mr. Hilton shared, Ryan is making progress. He is currently reading at an instructional level of mid first grade but he has come so far in just a little over a year since he started in the special education program. To review, when we created Ryan's IEPs at his last Annual

ARD in December, he was not able to read independently at a prekindergarten level. We targeted decoding consonant vowel consonant words as well as words with the silent /e/. He has met this goal at this time. We also targeted Ryan's reading comprehension by working on a variety of reading strategies to help him find the answer within the passage he read. Ryan has also met this goal when reading at an independent reading level of beginning first grade level which was our overall goal. In math comprehension, Ryan has learned a variety of math strategies to determine what the word problem is asking him to do. Ryan has made great growth in this area. When we first met last year, Ryan was able to answer very simple one-step word problems at a first grade level. Ryan has really taken ownership of his math strategies and is able to apply them to a variety of math word problems involving up to two and three steps. Ryan still needs some support in determining which operation to use at times but has demonstrated some independence in this skill as well. Ryan is now able to independently solve multi-step word problems at the third grade level with the use of his current accommodations to include oral administration of the test questions and answer choices to address his reading level and a multiplication chart to assist in his recall of facts.

(A) It sounds like Ryan is making some great progress! Are there any questions for either Mr. Hilton or Mr. Parker regarding how Ryan is currently performing academically or functionally; that is, how he is getting along in the classroom and school environment?

(All) (No, not at this time.)

(A) Are there any physical limitations that would keep Ryan from participating in the FitnessGram test which is the statewide physical fitness assessment administered starting at the third grade?

(GE) No, Ryan is not receiving any accommodations at this time that would impact his ability to participate in the FitnessGram.

(A) What about behavior? Mr. Hilton or Mr. Parker, any concerns? Mrs. King?

(GE) There are times in the classroom that Ryan appears off task but I think it is more of an attempt to avoid the assignment. I think because the reading is hard for him he needs assistance. I try very hard to provide the instructions to the whole class and then when it is time for the students to work independently, Ryan and another student will work with me at the back table. This works well but there are times when the reading is a majority of the assignment. At that time, Ryan will ask to go down to Content Mastery.

(SE) Yes. Right now Ryan receives his direct instruction in reading with me but when other assignments in Mr. Hilton's class require a lot of reading, Ryan prefers to come down to my room. I have observed no off task or avoidance behaviors from Ryan

during the times he is in my classroom. I think the small ratio and the fact that Ryan knows he will get the reading support he needs in here, help him to come in, focus and get the assignments done. I have both the science and social studies books on CD so Ryan can come down and listen to the chapters if that is needed. He enjoys this and he can follow along independently.

(P) My concerns are similar to Mr. Hilton's. I, too, see the off task behavior when I have him sit down at the dining room table for homework. If I sit next to him and help him with the words, he appears to know what to do most of the time. I guess that's another support for him to access a smaller ratio.

(A) Well then, Mr. Parker, based on Ryan's progress and his present needs, what does he still need to work on? What are some goals you are proposing for him?

(SE) Based on the information we have presented today, I am continuing to recommend that Ryan receive direct instruction at his current instructional level which is mid first grade in the area of reading and reading comprehension.

Based on Ryan's rate of progress since his last Annual ARD, I anticipate Ryan will be able to meet the following basic reading and reading comprehension goals discussed at a second grade level when we meet this time next year.

I would like to work with Ryan to increase his basic reading skills by expanding his decoding skills to now include independently reading four out of five words containing vowel patterns from a second grade level reading list over three consecutive data collection days.

I would also like to target independently reading four out of five words containing initial and final consonant blends from a from a second grade level reading list over three consecutive data collection days.

I have also included two objectives under each goal working toward mastery of both targeted decoding skills. The first objective has Ryan demonstrating the targeted skill while reading independently at the end of first grade level. The second objective has him doing the same at the beginning second grade level. This will help to capture Ryan's growth over the year-long period before his next Annual ARD.

In reading comprehension, I would like to continue working on a variety of reading strategies to help Ryan find the answer within the passage he read. The overall Annual goal will be for Ryan to demonstrate the appropriate use of his reading strategies by independently reading a second grade passage and answering four out of five comprehension questions about the passage.

I have also included two objectives under this reading comprehension. The first objective has Ryan demonstrating the targeted skill while reading independently at the end of first grade level. The second objective has him doing the same at the beginning second grade level. This will again help to capture Ryan's growth over the year-long period before his next Annual ARD.

Any questions about the proposed goals discussed at today's meeting?

(P) No, these goals sound great. I think Mr. Parker has captured all of the areas that Ryan still needs to work on. Are there any goals in the area of math that would support Ryan still needing to go to you for his math instruction?

(SE) At this time, I am not proposing any individualized goals in the area of math. I would though like to talk about what other supports Ryan may need in order to be successful. That will help us in determining the best placement to meet his current needs.

(D) Yes, let's talk about accommodations for the regular classroom setting. What are some of the accommodations that you, Mr. Hilton, have implemented that have been helpful this year to Ryan?

(GE) Many of the accommodations that Ryan uses are really just good teaching strategies but I truly feel that without them, he would not be successful as he is right now. To address his weakness with short term memory, Ryan uses the following accommodations regularly and with success: access to a multiplication chart, graphic organizers, simple checklists on solving word problems, chunking lengthy assignments, oral directions provided in written format as well and having the teacher request that Ryan repeat back the task being asked of him.

To address his reading difficulties in the general education classroom, Ryan has access to textbooks and novels on tape when available, oral administration of tests and I provide him a section to read in advance so he has time to become familiar with it.

Something we have not used in the past but as Ryan becomes older, we may want to consider is an assignment notebook. This is a good organizational tool and we could begin by having a check at the beginning and end of the day with either Mr. Parker or me. Mrs. King, would you be able to check it at night with Ryan to be sure he is getting everything completed?

(P) Of course I would! That sounds like that would be very helpful to both Ryan and me. I know I couldn't make it through the day without my day planner so this will be a good skill to learn for his future.

(A) Are there any other accommodations that we feel Ryan needs to be successful; anything he has been already using that has proven beneficial?

(GE) No, not really. He is a very hard worker and tries to be like everyone else in the class. He is very motivated by that desire.

(A) Alright, then let's talk about the best setting to meet the agreed upon goals and accommodations. Based on all of the information that has been shared today with regards to Ryan's current strengths and weaknesses, are you recommending that he continues to need an Intensive Program of Instruction in any academic area?

(SE) Based on the instructional level the reading goals are set, I would recommend Ryan continue receiving his direct instruction in the special education classroom in the area of Reading. He has shown to be making a steady rate of progress with the current amount of time reflected on his schedule of services. I feel that Ryan can accomplish the goals agreed upon today within a year's time by working with me 45 minutes of the Reading/Language Arts block. The remainder of the time, 45 minutes will be in the general education classroom with Mr. Hilton to address writing. Mr. Hilton and I will continue to collaborate on instruction and grading for Ryan as it is reflected on the report card.

Based on Ryan's current progress in math, I am not recommending Ryan continue to need an Intensive Program of Instruction in the area of math. Based on the results from Ryan's Performance Series we discussed earlier and his current IEP progress, Ryan is performing on grade level in math calculation and less than a year behind in the area of math reasoning. With access to his current accommodations, I would like to see Ryan receive his math instruction in the general education classroom. Mr. Hilton will be responsible for his progress in that setting.

In order to provide Ryan access to the accommodations we felt were needed for his success; I would like to continue providing him access to the Content Mastery lab for a minimum of 270 min/9weeks. That is an average of thirty minutes a week but Ryan may use that time however he needs it.

(A) Does the committee have any questions about these recommendations or what they are based on?

(GE) No, this sounds like a good recommendation to meet Ryan's current needs. I am pleased with Ryan's progress in math!

(P) I am very excited for Ryan but a little scared as well. What if he begins to struggle in the general education math class?

(SE) Should Ryan need more than that amount of Content Mastery time, he is welcome to come down more. I will document the amount of time he uses over a period of time and we may choose to come back to ARD to reflect a different Content Mastery time if necessary. We will communicate with you how he is doing here at school if you will communicate with us how he is doing at home with these changes.

(P) Of course.

(A) Now based on where Ryan is performing and what level he is receiving his instruction, let's discuss what state assessment will best meet his needs. As you know the state has adopted a new assessment called the STAAR which stands for State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness. Unlike in the past, the STAAR only has three versions, the STAAR, the STAAR Modified and the STAAR Alternative.

The state no longer offers an Accommodated version of the test but instead offers the STAAR to all students receiving instruction in the TEKS for their enrolled grade level with certain allowable accommodations if the student meets eligibility criteria. The STAAR is multiple-choice with four answer choices.

The STAAR Modified is available to students who are accessing their enrolled grade level TEKS through a modified curriculum. The STAAR Modified is only available to students in special education with a disability that significantly affects their academic progress. This test also provides allowable accommodations if the student meets eligibility criteria. The STAAR Modified is multiple choice with three answer choices, no short answer questions, fewer questions than STAAR and simplified selections and questions.

The STAAR Alternate is available to students who are accessing their enrolled grade level TEKS through prerequisite skills. The STAAR Alternative is only available to students in special education with a significant cognitive disability. This test is not a traditional paper or multiple-choice test. Instead it is a performance based test format based on specified teacher observations.

Based on Ryan's needs and grade level, we are looking at the STAAR or STAAR Modified test in the areas of Reading, Math and Writing which are the tests administered at the fourth grade level.

The state has created a planning worksheet to help guide the ARD committee in answering three questions to determine which test will be the most appropriate.

So as I read through these three criteria, let's determine if any of the tested academic areas meet all three criteria for the STAAR Modified.

Criteria #1 Do the student's present level of academic achievement and functional performance statements in the IEP lead the ARD committee to conclude that the student is multiple years behind grade-level or course expectations and will not progress at the same rate and level of rigor as their non-disabled peers?

(SE) Based on the information we shared earlier in the meeting regarding Ryan's present levels of functional and academic performance in the area of Reading reflect an instructional level at the mid-first grade level which puts him three years behind grade level at this time of the year. In writing and now math, Ryan is being instructed and performing at grade level expectations with accommodations so the STAAR Modified would not be an appropriate test for him in Writing or Math but we can discuss any allowable accommodations that may be available to him on the STAAR in just a minute.

(A) Criteria #2 Does the student's IEP contain standards-based (TEKS-based) goals indicating the modified content the student requires in order to access the grade-level or course curriculum?

(SE) Yes, I have reflected Reading goals and objectives beginning at the mid-first to end of second grade level for the next annual year, based on Ryan's present levels of academic performance.

(A) Criteria #3 Does the student require direct and intensive instruction in order to acquire, maintain, and transfer skills to other contexts?

(SE) Yes, Ryan receives an Intensive Program of Instruction in the area of Reading to address his current IEP goals. This instruction takes place 45 minutes every day in the special education classroom.

(A) Are we all in agreement that Ryan meets all three eligibility criteria for the STAAR Modified in the area of Reading?

(All) (Nod NO)

(A) Then I need to read some assurances to you Mrs. King.

If the ARD committee determines that the student will take an alternate assessment (STAAR Modified), the IEP must provide a statement of why the student cannot participate in the general assessment (STAAR) with or without allowable accommodations, and why an alternate assessment is appropriate for the student, including that all of the eligibility criteria are met.

The decision to administer an alternate assessment (STAAR Modified) is based on multiple sources of measurable, objective evidence, including (but not limited to) current IEP Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance statements, goals

and/or objectives, report cards, progress reports, work samples, teacher observations, Full and Individual Evaluation (FIE), standardized achievement test results, and classroom, district, and statewide assessment results. This decision is not based solely on the student's previous performance on a statewide assessment.

The decision to administer an alternate assessment (STAAR Modified) is made by the ARD committee, not administratively based on federal accountability requirements which limit the number of students taking an alternate assessment who can be counted as proficient in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) performance calculations. Although alternate assessments are intended for a small number of students, the proficiency caps do not limit the number of students receiving special education services who may take an alternate assessment.

The decision to administer an alternate assessment (STAAR Modified) is based on the student's educational need and the instruction the student is receiving. This decision is not based solely on the student's disability category and is not based on the student's racial or economic background, excessive or extended absences, or amount of time or location of service delivery.

Mrs. King, do you have any questions about the decision to administer the STAAR Modified in Reading and the STAAR in Writing and Math?

(P) No, I have no questions at this time.

(A) Looking at Ryan's accommodations that he is currently using on a consistent basis with success, are there any accommodations that would be available to him on the STAAR tests?

(SE) Yes. On the STAAR Modified Reading, Ryan is able to have the test questions and answer choices read aloud to him based on his documented disability in Basic Reading. We cannot read the reading passages to Ryan but we can read the questions and answer choices.

On the STAAR Writing, Ryan can have access to a graphic organizer to organize his thoughts. Oral administration is not available to any student due to the editing questions but the writing prompts can be read to Ryan.

On the STAAR Math, Ryan can have access to his multiplication chart, mnemonic devices to assist in remembering his problem solving strategies and the test questions and answer choices read aloud to him.

(A) That sounds great. Now let's talk about the district level assessments. At the fourth grade level, the district administers the Performance Series at the Beginning, Middle and End of the year. Is there any reason that Ryan cannot participate in this assessment?

(GE) No, I think that is good to have Ryan take the district assessment that his peers take. It keeps him familiar with the fourth grade material and lets the teachers know how he is performing compared to his peers. Realizing that reading is difficult for him though, I would recommend he be able to have the test question and answer choices read to him.

(A) Does that sound good to everyone?

(All) (Nod YES)

(A) The decisions we have made today regarding IEPs, Accommodations and district and state testing are based on Ryan's current levels of performance. Do we have any reason to think that this programming is not appropriate for the fifth grade as well?

(SE) No, I feel that everything we have discussed is appropriate to follow Ryan into the fifth grade. The only difference will be that the STAAR Science is administered next year in place of the STAAR Writing. But based on the criteria we reviewed earlier, with his accommodations, Ryan is not working significantly below grade level in Science, does not have IEPs in this area and does not receive a modified curriculum, so he would not qualify for the STAAR Modified test at this time. I think that the regular STAAR Science with the accommodation of Oral Administration would be very appropriate for Ryan to take next year.

(A) Thank you Mr. Parker. Does the committee have any questions about the recommended services for next year?

(D) I think that sounds great. I want to be sure everyone also understands that because we are making these decisions based on Ryan's current performance, that should we receive any additional information this year or next year that would no longer support the decisions we have made today, that the ARD committee can meet again at any time to reconsider our recommendations from today.

(P) I think this all sounds great. It appears you all know Ryan so well and I am so appreciative. He has struggled for so long and now just within a year's time, he has come so far. He is more confident and excited about coming to school. Thank you so much for everything you have done for my son.

(A) We are also proud of Ryan's accomplishments. It is always a good feeling leaving these ARD meetings hearing about all of the growth a student has made. It is very evident that Ryan has some great teachers and supportive parents that have helped him make the gains that have been shared today.

The next thing we need to address is Extended School Year services. These summer services are available to any special education student that has demonstrated regression of mastered skills after an extended break and was unable to recoup those skills in a certain amount of time. I have not heard any reason to believe at this time that Ryan meets the criteria for Extended Year Services at this time. Is that correct?

(SE) Yes, that is correct. Since this is Ryan's first year in the special education program, he had not mastered any goals prior to this meeting that fell prior to a long break. Ryan has made consistent progress throughout the year and he would not be eligible for Extended Year Services at this time.

(P) Although the idea of working on his skills over the summer sounds good, I am glad Ryan will not have to do this. We have several things planned this summer as a family that we are excited about.

(SE) I would still encourage you to read with Ryan this summer to keep up his skills over the long break. We will take data when all the students return after summer break to look for regression and I am in hopes that Ryan will maintain his current reading performance level.

(P) Oh we can definitely do that. Despite his reading difficulty, Ryan does enjoy reading. He tends to be drawn to comics more than chapter books I think because they are chunked a little more and not so overwhelming to him. Plus each frame has a picture to it. Is that okay?

(GE) Absolutely. Comics are popular with a lot of the fourth grade boys and as long as he is reading, then I think that is great. We want reading to be something the students see as a source of enjoyment, not something they see as negative or a punishment. As long as he is reading this summer he should do well when he returns. I would suggest that every once in a while, you ask him about what he is reading or what he thinks will happen next. See if he is connecting with the stories he is reading to help also with his comprehension of the story.

(P) Oh I can definitely do that. He likes the Calvin and Hobbes comics best which were also his father's favorites so they should have lots to talk about!

(A) The final thing that we need to address and I feel we have done this naturally throughout the ARD today is to ensure you that our goal is to have Ryan receive his instruction and supports in the least restrictive environment appropriate to meet his needs. Based on the agreed upon IEP goals and accommodations discussed today, we have talked about the continued need for direct intensive instruction at a modified curriculum level in reading but that in the area of math we would like to see Ryan receive his direct instruction in the general education classroom.

There are always benefits and potential harmful effects of having Ryan access the different instructional environments. In special education, Ryan has access to a more individualized, self-paced instruction which benefits him but at the same time limits his exposure to the entire grade level curriculum and learning experiences.

That being said though, due to Ryan's reading level, receiving all of his instruction in the general education classroom may result in frustration and poor self-esteem around his peers. We feel like the program we have recommended today will be beneficial to Ryan and far outweigh any potential harmful effects.

(P) Oh, I agree. I think we have a great balance of supports and opportunities.

(A) Should the committee agree to all proposals made today with respect to Ryan's programming, the district is able to meet these needs at his home campus and his services can start tomorrow. We will need to meet on or before this date next year unless there is a need to review any portion of the ARD in between that time. A meeting can be called by any member of this ARD committee if there is a need to discuss a change in the program as it is reflected today.

Mrs. King, are there any other concerns that have not been discussed today or any comments you would like to share?

(P) No, I am very pleased with everything you have done for my son. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns and answer my questions.

(A) Okay, I will ask Mrs. Dyke to review the minutes and if we are all in agreement then we will sign the ARD document indicating our agreement or disagreement with what has been proposed today.

Prior to doing that, I want to read some assurances to you Mrs. King.

The ARD committee assures that both general education and special education teachers have had the opportunity to contribute to the development of the goals and modifications, and they will receive the support necessary to implement these goals and modifications. This plan is based on your child's needs so that he/she can be educated at his/her individual level with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate and at no cost to you.

(A) Mrs. Dyke, will you read our minutes?

(Fade out as the diagnostician begins speaking)

APPENDIX G

THE NOVICE TEACHER & THE FIRST ARD MEETING: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW DISCUSSION POINTS

Email sent to Interview Participants

I want to begin by thanking you for volunteering to participate in an interview that will become an integral part of an opportunity to determine the factors that play a role in preparing novice teachers for their first Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting. I appreciate your time and effort. We will meet (describe exact location and accommodations). The interview will take no more than one hour. Please let me know if this time and place is not convenient.

Prior to Beginning the Interview:

1. Review initial consent form.

2. *The questions in this interview are designed to add qualitative information to assist me in further explaining the quantitative information provided through the survey. You need to know that you may refuse to answer any question in the interview for any purpose, without having to reveal to me your reasons for not answering the question. Do you understand that agreeing to participate in the interview does not mean that you must answer all questions?*

_____ Yes

_____ No

Role of the Module

1. Prior to your first ARD meeting, had you had any experience with the ARD process? (I.e. participated on behalf of yourself, a family member or a friend? In a practicum experience?)
2. Prior to your first ARD meeting, had you participated in college course work on the ARD process?
3. Prior to your first ARD meeting, had you participated in professional development sessions on the ARD process?
4. If you answered yes to any of the previous two questions, did you feel prepared to participate in the ARD process with those experiences alone? Why or why not?

Role of the Mentor

1. What concerns or needs specific to special education were met through the mentoring process?
2. What concerns or needs specific to special education did you have that you hoped would be met through the mentoring process that were not met?
3. What types of topics did your mentor discuss with you regarding special education?
4. What did you hope you and your mentor would discuss with regards to special education? (Possible topics)
 - Incorporating accommodations into lesson plans

- Classroom management skills for students with disabilities
- Discipline involving students with disabilities
- Classroom expectations for students with disabilities
- Holding parent conferences with parents of students with disabilities
- Understanding your role in the ARD paperwork
- Understanding your role in the ARD meeting
- Other (be specific)

5. What types of support or strategies did your mentor use that provided you with respect to special education?

_____ Allowing me to observe other classrooms

_____ Strategies modeled by the mentor

_____ Discussing my questions/concerns with my mentor

_____ Having my mentor observe my lesson and discuss my teaching

_____ Analyzing student work with my mentor

_____ Providing me support in preparation for my first ARD meeting

_____ Other strategies (describe) _____

The Role of the Media (Mock ARD Training Video)

1. What levels of disability(ies) did the student in your ARD possess? Please describe.
2. Was this an Annual, Review, Transfer, Transition, or Failure ARD? Please describe.
3. What types of supports did the student in question receive? Please describe.
4. Was the student being successful in their current program at the time of the ARD meeting? Please describe.
5. In what capacity do you work with the student being discussed in the ARD?
6. Do you feel that understanding your role in the ARD process is relevant to you as a novice teacher?

Significance of Supports

Rank the significance of the support as it played a role in your understanding of the components of the ARD process. (1 indicates most supportive; 3 indicates least supportive)

_____the Mentoring Program

_____the Mock ARD Training Video

_____your past personal experiences with the ARD process

Closing the Interview

Thank you for your time today. Your input is greatly appreciated.